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(MENTAL EXERCISES)

OF A

WORKING MAN.

BY

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QUESTION," GLASGOW FIRST PRIZE ESSAY ON "THE ERRORS
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Dedication.

CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.,

This Volume is

(BY PERMISSION)

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

AS A TOKEN OF THE AUTHOR'S ADMIRATION OF HIS GENIUS,

AND OF HIS UNIFORM ENDEAVOURS

TO DEPICT THE VIRTUES AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE

OF THE

WORKING CLASSES.

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PREFACE.

THE papers composing the following volume are what they profess to be "Mental Exercises," mostly written several years ago, when the author was very young, for mere amusement during leisure hours, and without any view to publication. Those on the "Intellect and the Emotions"—the "Law of Conscience," and "Geology and Atheism" were written in 1837;—those on "The Aristocracy and Education," and "Some branches of Knowledge," in 1838;—those on "Milton," "Poetry and Insanity," and "Poetry and Civilization," in 1840;—that on the "Origin of Evil," in 1841, and those on "Macaulay's Characteristics," "Lord Bacon," and "The Theory of Human Perfectibility," in 1846. They have, of course, been re-written for the press. Four of them appeared in a popular periodical publication three years ago.

The author is aware that some of the subjects are not of a very popular nature, and in danger of being rejected by many readers who prefer lighter and less exacting materials for thought; but as he, himself, preferred for study, subjects either little hackneyed, or, if possible, wholly original, the discussions in several of the papers were a labour of love. Those on "Poetry and Insanity," and "Poetry and Civilization," were wholly new. Those on "Geology and Atheism,"—the "Origin of Evil," and the "Theory

of Human Perfectibility" had seldom been popularly discussed. The paper on "Macaulay's Characteristics," was written previous to the publication of his "History," and before any lengthened analysis of his characteristics had been drawn,—whilst the subject of the paper on "Lord Bacon" had not commanded much public attention.

If it should be said that the author, as a Working Man, should have confined himself to subjects more within the scope of his powers, he has only to answer, that every mind possesses some distinct tendency or bent, and that in attempting to discuss such questions, he followed his own inclinations, and for his own pleasure. Without requesting any person to read the book from beginning to end, he would merely request those who *do* take it up, *not* to throw it down again, simply because, as the title denotes, the contents are the "Mental Exercises of a Working Man;" but to dip into it—to read, at least, some portions of it, and then endeavour to judge whether the writer was justified in bringing his mind to bear upon subjects requiring much and varied learning and discrimination, and a depth of sagacity to which he can lay no claim. The book with all its faults, and its merits, if it possess any, is his own; and in bringing it before the public he would merely say, that he neither deprecates censure nor courts applause, though he may bend submissively to the one, and smile upon the other, when dictated by a clear discrimination and a due regard to truth.

Bradford, July, 1851.

MENTAL EXERCISES

WORKING MAN.

ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.—REASON AND REVELATION.

It is no doubt considered wise in man to refrain from any attempt at fathoming questions which, from the limited nature of his capacity, God has plainly determined shall remain unfathomable by human reason. Yet those tantalizing enigmas which seem by their depth as if formed on purpose to baffle human ingenuity, are the very subjects most attractive, by the inscrutable mystery surrounding them. When we cannot bring them to the surface and analyse their elements, we lose ourselves in endless conjecture,—we plunge in speculation, and often revolve in the whirlpool of scepticism as a refuge from perplexing regions of doubt and uncertainty; as if scepticism, or unbelief, could be other than a state of doubt and uncertainty,—a midway region between light and darkness,—a mystifying twilight produced by the vapours and the fogs of sense, wan-

ring with reason and the light of the spirit. The pride and presumed intellectual greatness which scorns anything like a fixed principle of belief in the high and sacred elements of truth, and openly prefers rolling in the muddy shallows of that material and mystic transcendentalism, too often mistaken for profundity, is only one of the many forms which scepticism assumes when driven from its ancient strongholds. To avow, with the millions of intellectual dwarfs who can fathom the ocean of eternal truth no deeper with the line of reason than current orthodoxy, a belief in the surface doctrines of Christianity and the declarations of Scripture, were a heresy against the supremacy of that code of reason and mental sufficiency which, according to them, must or ought to become a substitute for the weaker and insufficient spiritual system of heaven. Though Luther and Grotius, Pascal and Newton, Locke and Boyle, Hall and Chalmers, found in Scripture the only sufficient light for the direction of reason, the only efficient prop for the weaknesses of nature, and the only way of immortality and salvation, these intellectual giants, who scorn all heavenly help, and, like Lord Herbert, count reason sufficient, still sound on their dim and perilous way, unenlightened with what led others to the skies, and professing to seek, from amidst the chaos of their own understandings, a key to unlock the wards of a higher eternal reason than Scripture can embody or impart,—an avenue to a more unclouded prospect of truth and mental excellence. What satisfied the great minds of our own and former generations, is not sufficient for them. Their longings and aspirings are too vast and high, their visions

too sublime, their reasonings too deep and comprehensive, to yield assent to any simple faith, or subscribe to the articles of any belief or creed which satisfy the majority of mankind, and which the vulgar can in some measure comprehend. Their delight is in the clouds of sense and the mists of mind,—in German myths and neological absurdities,—in worthless testimony and fabulous tradition,—in all that can perplex and darken belief, and obscure the pure light of truth,—vainly attempting to rear a superstructure of sublimated reason upon the ruins of that holy faith which they seem so desirous of overthrowing.

That all the articles of our creed should be within the reach of our understandings, so as to destroy all necessity for faith in the invisible and immortal, may, to many, seem a desire just and reasonable, though vain. But, because through our finite minds we cannot grasp all the truths, comprehended by the infinite alone, included in creation and the scheme of Christianity, we would wish to extinguish and reduce all the divine mysteries to a level with our finite reason, were at once impious and absurd. That in its indefinite and vague longings and desires the human mind is illimitable, and, like the chained eagle against the bars of its cage, endeavouring to project its vision beyond the bounds of its earthly prison, none can deny; but to affirm—because, through a want of faith, its range of spiritual vision is still more limited—that the light of revelation is insufficient, or, on the other hand, unnecessary for human illumination, is like challenging the Deity to the test of reason, and presuming that the plan of the universe

is a failure. It is, in truth, a virtual impeachment of the wisdom of Omnipotence. Thus, the perplexing question of the origin of moral evil has at all times ministered to the scepticism of discontented minds, and afforded a plea for the outpouring of their complaints, and their rejection of Christianity.

All agree in the existence and operation of a moral sense, which intuitively assures us of the existence of a Moral Governor, of whose eternal mind our own must be the transcript; and the sceptic, as well as the believer, only perceives, though pride prevents confession, through the material universe, abundant evidence of benevolence and design, fully agreeing with that shown forth less openly, but as truly, by the counterpart evidence of mind, and all the intonations of conscience. But if God be so good, so righteous and benevolent, whence and how came the evil which is in the world? If there once existed a golden age of innocence and peace, of which poets sing, and of which tradition, lost in mists and fables, gives so many allusions, how did man become corrupt and evil, and taint the fountain of life with ever-spreading, ever-deepening pollution? The answers to such questions, at all times beyond the power of mere reason, have been such as to show the importance attached to them by mankind in every age of the world; and to show that, even as viewed by heathen sages or magi in the earliest ages recorded the original existence of evil in human nature was not a portion of the creed of the various peoples scattered over the earth. The fact of some original apostacy from a standard of truth and innocence seems to have reached downwards from the creation

of the first of the human family, and spread as its every living branch receded from the centre and peopled other countries; the literal truth becoming, as it was diffused and corrupt, more faint, and, by admixture with idolatry, merging at last into fable, and finally becoming all but extinct among the many tribes and nations, semi-barbarous and cruel, then peopling the earth. And as it is a law of nature both to love and to fear, or to stand in awe of some great, powerful, and mysterious being, who holds our destinies in his hands, they, benighted, vainly strove, in obedience to this law, to wring what they conceived to be truth from nature and reason alone, and why should we wonder if they failed in the attempt?

The attempts to find a key to unlock the door to this inscrutable mystery have been many, but, apart from Scripture, all have either more or less met with signal defeat. From the time when Zoroaster propounded his theory—a period of five hundred years before the Trojan war, and hence many centuries previous to the existence of any system of Grecian philosophy—down to the attempts of Paley and Brougham, the question has been found to baffle the unaided powers of man. The saying that there is good as well as evil in the world, and that, when fairly balanced, the good preponderates, cannot help us to a solution of the question, but actually seems to wrap it in deeper perplexity, and again urges us to ask,—When God is all benevolence and love, and has done so much to beautify and adorn, and render the earth, but for man's evil passions, a scene of happiness and peace, how he has allowed evil and misery in any shape to exist, to blight the prospect,

and make sorrow prolific? That God is just as well as benevolent, and punishes men for their frequent lapses from virtue and goodness, cannot, even here, give a solution to the problem. We are aware that transgressions against every moral law meet with a corresponding bodily or mental punishment; and that virtue and happiness, vice and punishment, are inseparably connected as causes and effects, and hence that God's moral government of the world as constituted is just as well as benevolent. But still the question remains unanswered. It does not relate to God's government of the world as now constituted, but how evil has been allowed to become an element in its constitution at all. How was the moral poison first infused into the human heart, and made to flow in corrupted streams through every member of the whole human family? How, or why, did the chords of harmony vibrating in unison with the choir above, first begin to jar and emit sounds of discord, of wailing and woe? To assume, again, in reply, that if God has permitted evil somehow to enter the world, he has also, as a compensation for present misery, promised future happiness in a higher and a better world, is only an evasion of the question, a mere shifting of the subject, and the introduction of another almost as perplexing. Naturally or morally, we have no exact evidence or intimation of the nature and enjoyments of a future world; and cannot see why evil should first be introduced to render such prospective compensation necessary, and then the question of compensation be brought forth to atone for the original introduction of evil. This were, indeed, not only reasoning in a circle, but placing the

Deity himself in a position of singular difficulty with regard to both creation and providence.

As in the East the scene of man's creation is supposed to have been laid,—so in the East, ever prolific in the spontaneous growth and prevalence of idolatry, and those rich and luscious exotics which decay in the West, arose the first theory for attempting a solution of the problem of existing moral evil of which we have any knowledge. And, perhaps, human reason has seldom, by its own unaided powers of ingenuity, propounded a more plausible theory to account for the existence of evil, than the system of Zoroaster. The perpetual conflict of evil with good in all minds and natures, and hence in the transactions of all worldly affairs, seemed to him the natural effect of an effusion, or effusions, emanating from two great predominating powers, spirits, or principles,—the one light, the other darkness—the one good, the other evil—the one benevolent, the other malignant. Man, according to this doctrine, receiving the boon of existence from one or both of these divinities, naturally prostrates himself at the shrines of both; before the God of light, to propitiate his favour; before the God of darkness, to avert his wrath. Plausible, however, as this wide-spread theory may have appeared to heathen sages and their idolatrous followers—Plato, indeed, in his later days being one of them—its very plausibility lies in the fallacious nature of its foundation.

In the first place,—it must appear clear that the question of the actual origin of evil, is, by this hypothesis, left exactly where it was. The mere dogma of this creed, that two opposing powers or

principles are continually at war, producing each an equal amount of good and evil, is neither more nor less than saying that good and evil in human nature are continually at war, and producing the effects in the moral world, which we at all times experience and behold. But, even supposing the amount of active good and evil in the moral world to be exactly equal, which it is impossible to prove, we are led a step further back into something like the original argument and induced to ask, whence those opposing deities or principles derived their existence and authority to pervade and permeate the whole moral and intellectual universe? It will do nothing to say that both have been eternal; because each, in that case, would claim the title and rights of original creator, and would have stamped the lineaments of his eternal moral nature so visibly upon his created progeny, that angels and demons could alone have existed, with an impassable gulf between, and a union of the two natures been impossible. But in truth no creative act on either side could have taken place, much less a union of the two natures been effected. The perpetual conflict and the balance of power exerted on either side would have made creation impossible, even by two omnipotent forces. Neither could exist by an act of self creation, and become a creative self-contradiction or annihilator of self. Neither could have existed from all eternity without acting during every period of past duration, and producing effects similar to those which we now behold; and neither could act or have exerted creative power at any far distant epoch of the

universe, without having existed from all eternity at the very foundation of being; and, even if it should be assumed that they are only powers delegated by some still mightier power antecedent to themselves,—who thus ordained their principles and modes of action,—then such admission virtually annihilates the doctrine, and we are at once driven back to the original argument and lost as much as ever in its inextricable mazes.

In the second place,—it is clear that no eternal being, just and benevolent, without the annihilation of his moral attributes—which were a contradiction in terms—could people the earth with intelligent and rational beings, at once free and fully responsible to him for all their actions, and then place them beneath the sway and influence of an irresistible and fatal destiny without choice or power of appeal, as would be the case if swayed in all their principles or passions by influences emanating from the powers of moral light and darkness, thus ever contending for the mastery. Nay, in truth it were a contradiction to speak of Deity as creating man free and responsible, and yet bound by an iron necessity to follow certain fixed rules and principles of action. Under the government of a God whose moral attributes all merged into that of benevolence alone, no pure active evil could have been introduced or suffered in any shape or quality to exist; and a God of omnipotent malignity, could such exist, would as surely have prevented an advent of truth and goodness from being infused into the elements of his dark universe, to light up its gloom and create a perpetual war of principles against

himself; and no Omnipotent and Omniscient God capable of the act of creation, would, like the God of Epicurus, hereafter repose in eternal indolence, careless how his worlds rolled, and delegate his powers and authority to other beings of adverse principles and natures, whose actions would throw a doubt upon the integrity and righteousness of his government, and induce man in every age to question the wisdom and benevolence of its design.

In the third place,—it is certain that no proof whatever can be advanced from any appearance in the world, of a perfect equalization of good and evil existing through all its regions; and hence the dogma of the equal power possessed by the two warring principles, is only a shrewd guess deduced from the nature of the human mind and the condition of society in all parts of the world. That the amount of good preponderates over the amount of evil, is a belief universal among mankind, who hence infer the ascendant benevolence of Deity; whilst the hope of a blissful immortality, intuitively strong in every bosom, throws a higher light upon the mortal sojourn, tending to lessen existing gloom and sorrow. But, if so, where can we look for the equal adjustment of these opposing principles? One infinitesimal jot of triumph or one step of advance by the principle of evil into the territory of the principle of good, or of the principle of good into that of evil, at once annihilates the doctrine. As the whole is made up of parts, and the argument proceeds upon a consideration of the total sum of good and evil in the universe, individual cases cannot be considered;

or, if so, even amidst the jarring elements around, how many myriads impressed with the amount of joy and happiness falling to their lot, might echo the language of Paley, "It is a happy world after all?"

But, in the fourth place,—if for the sake of argument we admit the existence of two great originating principles or beings of equal powers, but opposing natures, and as presiding over the universe holding perpetual conflict, to what final conclusion does it lead us? Does it not appear evident that by being thus equally balanced and exercising an equal power, they must have bound each other with the chains of uncontrollable destiny,—have remained in a condition of perpetual torpor and inactivity, incapable of producing any effects, separately or jointly, for either good or evil; and thus as Gods, have become eternally annihilate? The doctrine indeed contains within itself the seeds of all atheism, as a God or a plurality of Gods, with powers thus opposed and balanced, can virtually be neither good nor evil, and hence a figment of the brain—a superficial nonentity. Containing however within itself more or less of the creeds of many Eastern nations, and much of the present philosophy or theology of Persia, it serves to shew us emphatically that the question of the origin of evil has, in every age, been of the same dark and perplexing nature; whether or not—as represented by Byron—it drove Cain to the commission of the first murder.

That in heathen countries, and in early ages when the minds of men were unsettled and ignorant

in their views of religious faith, and the oneness and spiritual nature of its foundation, and of those high and inscrutable mysteries which at all times surround the outer pavillion as well as the inner shrine of God's temple, such theories as those of Zoroaster should be formed, might *a priori* have been expected. When Revelation was shed forth and enlightened all on whose hearts its beams descended, so that no subterfuge could easily be found for evading conviction and belief, all that subtle disputants could do to divide the empire of Christ was erroneously to interpret the most simple doctrines, to give prominence to what they thought ministered to the ruling passions and propensities, to feed intellectual pride, and by a wilful obliquity of moral vision endeavour to draw the carnal minds of men down to their own corrupt standard, instead of elevating them by correct and simple exposition of scripture truth to a knowledge of its highest principles. Christianity was too pure for the unchanged carnal heart of man; too simple for the lovers of mystery; too antagonistic to established oracles and hierophant shrines, to conquer the beliefs and hearts of people wedded to outward symbols and demonstrations of earthly grandeur; and hence unable to give up at once, at the appearance of a new and mightier sage and king, whose empire was the heart and whose weapons were principles, all their old established associations and beliefs. As deformity commands more attention and speculation than simple beauty, and discord and noise then pure unmixed harmony, so the existence and active operation of evil in all

minds drew more attention than the contrasting principle of goodness. The world was dark, ignorant, and wicked: man by his gropings found his way into the dimly lighted regions of moral truth impeded by barriers impenetrable to mere human nature; and who can wonder, when the inner shrine was shut from his view and no clear and audible voice was uttered thence to tell of the profound mysteries of good and evil, that he should indulge in framing plausible schemes to account for their existence? Though Plato had travelled far in search of knowledge and learnt much in Egypt from scattered descendants of Abraham, still in the land of Ham, respecting the doctrines of creation and the soul, yet we find his endeavours to explain the cause of evil as dreamy and contradictory as those of the Indian Zoroaster.

The doctrine held by Plato, and subsequently by others, that evil was first introduced into the world by the malignity of matter in its union with the mind, is a theory as void of foundation as that of the Eastern sage. If Plato himself was, as from the nature of this doctrine we have every reason to think he was, a believer in the immateriality of mind as held by his master Socrates, then, unless he proves his position, he at once condemns his own theory. If the mind be immaterial, one and indivisible, indestructible and eternal, capable of existing independently of and apart from the body,—and itself be the vital principle which thinks, and by whose volition the body, the organized agent for performing its will, acts in obedience to its dictates and desires,—then it is in itself the foundation of

thought, of reason, and of motives for action, whether good or evil, which colour and determine principles; and hence, according to these, it is either virtuous or vicious. But matter, incapable of thought, the passive organ through which the mind displays its attributes, is merely possessed of inert qualities, and hence cannot sway the mind to the performance of actions either good or evil. The minds of infants being considered pure and irresponsible until after the dawn of reason, when the seeds of evil are sown and begin to germinate, may seem a plausible ground for the belief of matters malignity; but we have no proof of the infant's mind being void of consciousness and perception, though the *prima facie* evidence may favour such a view, and therefore no proof of matter corrupting mind as the latter expands with the growth of the body. On the contrary, we are certain that matter can corrupt only matter, and that mind can corrupt only mind. It seems indeed a clear contradiction in terms to suppose that the inert passive matter of the body, organized though it be into the most beautiful and commanding form of all the Creator's works, can essentially contaminate, so as to change the nature of the spiritual and the invisible, but conscious and inalienable *we*. All simple associations with the external universe elevate and purify its joys; associations with society on the other hand have a tendency to lower its moral standard, blunt its feelings, darken its perceptions of truth, and sensualize its propensities; but here it is not the contact with mere matter, but with mind as the moving spring of

society, which lowers it in the moral scale. But whence the first bias to moral evil in the human heart? If matter be from eternity—as ancient sages taught to get rid of the difficulty of creation—then, according to this theory it has always possessed the attribute of malignity; and man, from his first infant being or creation, wherever or however that mysterious advent came to pass, or whether he, like matter itself, be from eternity, can never have been a free responsible agent, because neither virtuous nor vicious from choice, but a being ruled and influenced on every side by the properties of matter; not a subject of God's moral government, but a spiritual being ruled by a higher material destiny. Here is a chain of contradictions.

There is, we are taught to believe, at the birth of every child, the creation of an immortal soul, one and complete in itself—of a responsible and eternal being; but how the mysterious union of matter and spirit takes place, or how it acts through all its stages of existence, a free agent, yet bound to a material body, or through what scenes and changes it may pass before its condition is eternally fixed we know not, and until enlightened by higher knowledge and experience, can never know: but every human being is morally certain of his own responsibility, intuitively certain of his own immortality, and positive from consciousness that it is the immaterial mind which thinks, which becomes spiritualized and holy, or sensual and corrupt; and that the body itself, as the mere passive agent, or symbolic incarnation, through which the mind displays its spiritual

and moral attributes, cannot possibly corrupt by any inherent malignity it may be fabled to possess, in common with outward matter, the invisible and the eternal spirit.

As for the supposition of some, that a principle of action operating in the nature of the first created of our race, supposing them to have had a beginning, would impel them to deeds of an evil nature, it, we apprehend, is equally incapable of solving the problem. The nature of every action depends upon the disposition and the will, and is virtuous or vicious from the nature of the motives impelling it. The principle of action must therefore exist in the mind, and be wholly contra-distinguished from the system of Plato. But the question is not simply, how any given principle of action led them or stimulated them onward to transgression, to be followed by a necessity of nature by all their succeeding progeny, but how such principle of action of an evil nature and tendency first obtained possession of their minds—a question which may again be carried backward to eternity and lost in its incomprehensible labyrinths. To say that a principle of action produced, or brought forth the latent evil, is nothing more than saying that such evil exists, without going one step backwards to search into the original cause or causes of its being implanted in their nature. That we have a principle of action within us, is certain. We have motives and affections, emotions and habits, all tending to produce actions of either a virtuous or a vicious character; but the latent springs of much of all these are to us as great a mystery as the substratum of mind itself. If man originally, in the golden

age of innocence, was holy and happy, the principles which must then have predominated within must have been of that fixed and eternal moral nature which, without some extraneous cause, must have ever remained the same. What then was this mighty cause? Can reason explain it? No.

The scheme of optimism, hazarded by Liebnitz, like those of his predecessors, plausible as it is, and free from some of the many glaring contradictions which at once destroy ancient theories, cannot penetrate what is essentially impenetrable, and designedly classed among the mysteries clear to the infinite mind alone. Among the infinite number of worlds present to the mind of God, any one of which he might have created, the present is the one which, being nearest to perfection to be premissive of evil, it was possible, as such, for him to create. This is one great feature of his scheme. But according to this there is a manifest limitation placed to the power and exercise of Omnipotence, which is a contradiction. And further still, the advocates of this scheme necessarily make the Deity himself the subject of a necessity as iron-handed as is his creature man. But whence the limitation to his power in being unable to frame a perfect world, peopled with free agents, capable of falling, yet sinless? Without contradiction we may imagine that, like so many Sextus's in guilt, he could have created innumerable worlds differing in degrees of delinquency, or worlds wholly free from all approximation to moral evil of any kind or degree. If not, then his Omnipotence and Omniscience have vanished; all his attributes, like the corruscations of the aurora borealis, have been en-

gulphed in air ; his throne, based on the adamant of eternity, has sunk baseless, and his very existence, proclaimed in whispers and in thunder by men and by angels, is a mere intellectual idea, a created non-entity.

Another feature of the scheme is, that the spiritual mind, by its union with matter and human organization, became unable through a tendency to indolence, to retain its purity and lapsed into sin. This he illustrates by pointing us to a ship in full sail passing down a river. The speed of its motion is owing to the rapid motion of the river, the winds and its canvas sails ; but the cause of the slowness of its motion, is the lading which sinks it deeper in the water. The *vis inertiae* is therefore in the lading, and not in the ship itself ; and so in like manner the human mind, by the *vis inertiae* of the body, lost its pre-eminent distinctions and sunk into moral imperfection. But mind is invisible and impalpable, and how its mere union with the body, though in its immediate action restricted to this earth, impairs the elasticity of its powers and energies, should be more clearly explained to render the theory comprehensible. Power lessens as corruption increases ; but how came matter to be corrupt ? Is corruption inherent in its properties or its substratum ? If in either, man by the first contact lost all free agency or responsibility, and all power to shake of the yoke of earth thus inevitably fastened upon him by an arbitrary creator. Have the seeds of corruption been sown since its first creation ? If so, by what means and at whose fiat was the malignant nature infused, and made capable of tainting the moral nature of

mind through endless ages? But indolence or *vis inertiae* is merely the negation of action; and how, therefore, does it follow that inert and passive matter can be the active medium, or means through or by which moral influences are produced upon, and poison infused into the minds of the whole human race? Mere passive indolence, or inert quiescence is here confounded with active moral evil. The mode of action is left entirely unexplained; the enlightened scientific Christian can no more, through mere reason, solve the perplexing problem of the introduction of moral evil into the world than Plato, the honey-lipped advocate of matters, malignity. But here may we not ask, whence the necessity for charging the inanimate though organized corpuscles of the globe in union with mind, with the production of that evil which alone can spring from a moral being or beings armed with moral powers, either wilfully impeding the operations of a moral statute, or infringing its principles and bounds? Is Omnipotence limited in power or Omniscience in wisdom, or overruled by an uncontrollable necessity? What power then placed Him under the resistless curb? Here again we are thrown back and baffled. So effectually, indeed, are we overcome in attempting thus to solve the infinite mystery, that until revelation comes to our aid, draws away the scales from our eyes, and with a blaze of light irradiates all, and through creation and providence displays the character of the moral governor of the universe, we grope as it were in a world of darkness, we plunge in a boundless sea of mystery. To Scripture then let us go.

At the commencement of the Mosaic history we are informed that when God, in accordance with His eternal purpose, called our world into being, He, through the dictates of His wisdom, adorned it with a splendour and beauty pleasant to the eye; and so adapted all its elements and its fruits to minister to the comfort and gratification of the beings he should hereafter create for its inhabitants, that they might perceive His benevolence and care, and adore Him as their creator, preserver, and guide. They were created, and Eden, we are told, was set apart for their habitation. Formed in their moral natures after the image of God himself, their only bodily occupation was to keep the garden and dress it, while, in their simple but sublime devotions, they held communion with the Father and the subordinate intelligences of heaven. There, with his consort Eve, the great delight of Adam was to exercise his well balanced faculties in contemplating himself the glorious scenes around him, and God through all, and then transfer unto him in all their fullness and purity the feelings engendered by that divine emotion in which his whole soul was wrapt—his love. Nor was his love to God divided with other and grosser passions—he knew nothing of sin, and suspected nothing. He was filled with joy; but his joy sprang from his love. He might have been actuated by hope, if he had obtained through divine converse a knowledge of a higher world; but we can as little imagine the nature of that hope animating his bosom, void of fear or contradiction, as we can imagine the nature of his love, which, void of the restraints of an active frowning conscience, and a

darkened understanding, and vitiated reason, rose instinct with divinity to the throne of the Creator. Here then we behold the commencement of the first scenes of the great drama of the human race—here we behold the first glimpse of our original parent upright and strong in moral rectitude, because endowed with the spirit of omnipotent holiness in his nature,—clear and comprehensive in his understanding, because practically ignorant of sin and its dire consequences in both worlds—here we behold the first progenitor of the human race culling the fruits permitted from Eden's pregnant boughs, drinking the water from its crystal streams, while the lion and the lamb sported together, the serpent, uncursed, reared its speckled crest in the sun; harmony unmarred by one discordant string, swelled in unison with the angelic host, the praises of the Father, and sin and death, twin-born, with hell following after, kept, envious, far aloof from the hallowed scene.

But sin has entered that once happy world. Its reign has been from of old, and from of old its spread has been universal. The ravenous animals which now affright and often destroy the traveller are descended from the original stock which sported amidst the flowery beds of Eden. The earth which now brings forth briers and thorns, is the same earth which brought forth spontaneous crops of hyacinths and roses. The elements which now surround our globe and minister life to its creatures, are the same elements, which, untainted and salubrious, once surrounded Eden. But where is now animal kindness? Where the earth's spontaneous fertility? Where the original kindliness and salubrity of the elements?

What clouds now intercept the sun—what poisonous exhalations, what ærial putrefactions arising from the accursed earth, hang on the atmosphere, breathing pestilence among the nations and adding their horrors to the lazarus! Whence that lightning darting from the burthened cloud? Whence that terrific thunder which panic-strikes the heart, and rolls its echoes through the atmosphere? Tell also of its sweeping floods, its howling hurricanes and disastrous earthquakes, and those volcanic eruptions which deluge cities in fire, while distant generations pass and repass upon the encrusted lava, and explore the now subterranean streets. The sterile nakedness of winter revives with the spring, and blooms with the summer: but what toil is expended in promoting its growth and beauty. Has not the rose its thorns—spring its chilling blasts and colds—summer its appalling thunders and parching droughts, and autumn its unwelcome floods? Yes; to whatever season we look, whatever object we examine, whatever region we traverse we find the soil and the elements, in their relation to man, pregnant with the burden of sin; we find that the earth is indeed accursed for man's sake, and that man weaves curses for himself; that evil dwelleth continually with good, that the clearest day has its clouds, and that the brightest smiles are pregnant with tears.

The natural is a type of the moral world; and the moral aspects of society emblematical of the calms and storms, the frosts and fevers of the heart. As in the natural world there are elements of dissension—the lightnings flash, the thunders roar, and the earthquakes heave; we may see its moral counter-

part when we gaze around us, and learn by testimony from all other parts of the world, that into one universal lazar-house of extinguished principle, evil—rampant evil, has cast the moral world. When the Son of God descended from the throne of his Father to bruise the serpent's head, into such an arena of ignorance and wickedness he entered. The world lay before him one vast mass of guilt, disease and pollution. Estranged from the human heart, unknown, unsought after, except by some few who vainly exhausted their minds in trying to find him out, the Deity was wrapt in his pavilion of darkness. The film which overshadowed the human mind in all ages since the fall, had doubled the thickness of its scales; and every vestige of that mind which was once the image of its maker, had so far sunk in ruin that by idolatry and superstition, by sensuality and crime, both public and private, by war and bloodshed as exercised between men and nations of men, death, not only temporal, but spiritual death upon the pale horse with hell following in the train, appeared exulting as the human mind wallowed and triumphed in the red sea of its crimes.

Such are the pictures warranted by Scripture, and from the present condition of the world we have no reason to think them overcharged. How then did this evil, productive of such terrible consequences, originate?

Professing to believe that the only true and definite solution to this most perplexing of all questions can only be found in Scripture, to that record of divine truth we must at last resort for an answer. In leaving our own world and ascending the regions

of eternal glory, we are distinctly informed, though not in a chain of regular history, that at some far remote period of celestial being, not mensurable by our epochs of time, a revolt of a portion of its angelic inhabitants against the Most High, led on by Lucifer, an angel or archangel of pre-eminent distinction, subjected them to an eternal banishment from his presence into a region of endless sorrow, darkness and despair. "The angels," says Jude, "who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Such a stupendous event as this war of angels with their Creator, is, of course, beyond the grasp of human comprehension. We cannot pass into those scenes of unutterable splendour to realise the nature of spiritual existence apart from the body, and again return to our own earth with the secrets of eternity. But human reason is ambitious, and in discussing such questions there are few but delight to soar as well as plunge. Could we scale the heights of heaven, we could solve the dark problem of evil. Could we scale the heights of heaven we could explore the depths of hell, and read the archives of Deity graven on the pillars of eternity.

The pride of Lucifer, or Satan, according to Timothy, was the prime moving cause of the angelic revolt; and here with its first existence in heaven at the very throne of God, and among his assembled spirits, the perplexing mystery begins. Before the material universe at the fiat of the Creator, rose from the abyss and rolled in order; before his everlasting throne was surrounded with innumerable myriads of

angels and archangels, cherub and cherubim, seraph and seraphim, and before man was created and placed upon earth an intermediate link in the chain of intelligence between the brute and the angel, the omnipotent author of all existed, serene in his eternity, and surveyed the mighty course of events which should come to pass in the universe, which as yet existed only in his infinite mind; and in the immutability of his nature, saw the evolutions of the mighty plan, worthy of his wisdom commence their wondrous operations in heaven above, and in the rolling spheres around and below him, and in the complacency of his infinite goodness and wisdom he pronounced all very good. In his own elevated region and around his throne sinless purity and perfect happiness were ordained to dwell. Passing and repassing from scene to scene, or with infinitely greater speed than light from planet to planet, and from constellation to constellation, bearing messages of love,—the glowing ones, the burning ones, and angelic ones, breathing the beatitudes, rested not, nor were weary in their glorious work. From their own crystal eminence, they might perchance be able to survey other worlds and mark the havoc made by disobedience and sin,—if sin before it entered heaven could by any means have blighted other spheres,—but they could not weep nor lament;—the perfect justice and benevolence of God was seen through all, and as yet the flaming brand and torch of rebellion had not scattered plagues and war within their own kingdom of light. But even there, rumours at last arose of a defect of loyalty in the chief archangel. Disaffections spread through many of the angelic

legions, and there was war in heaven ;—and hell being prepared by Almighty justice for the rebellious, they were cast flaming as lighting from the battlements of heaven into the gloomy abyss.

Thus much we gather, by declaration and inference, from scripture ; but even here the mystery is still as unfathomable by human reason as ever. We are allowed to obtain a glimpse of the mystery, but not of the solution to its origin. How in that happy and sinless region, where nothing existed but what God had created, and his vision at all times surveyed, where sin had been hitherto unheard of, or, so far as we know, been known in any region of the universe, it first gained admission,—is the great problem which the secrets of eternity alone can disclose. All here that man can do and believe, is, that the Deity in his wisdom saw fit to permit its entrance, even though from eternity he had seen the immeasurable extent of ruin it would produce, the extent of angelic glory it would eclipse in gloom, and the amazing change it would effect throughout creation. But though this conjecture harmonizes best with the attributes of God, and is the safest for the limited faculties of man, the discontented opponents of all fixed belief, again and again put the question, how evil hitherto unknown and unheard of could be permitted to enter heaven in any shape or principle, until it had absolutely received a created nature at the fiat of God himself. To this no answer can of course be given. God saw before creation all possible and all present existing worlds, he is the sole Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator of all ; and that nothing could enter into the universe, either of evil or of good, without his

knowledge is certain. Did he then issue any express command or commission to lower created intelligences, to create other worlds or principles opposed to his own government than those created by himself? We have no intimation in scripture of any such delegated power being conferred upon any created intelligence. When we therefore say, the questioner proceeds, that the evil principle in question was by him permitted to exist, what is it but saying that the principle in question could not without a contradiction in terms, be created except by himself, before he permitted its active operation? Would not saying otherwise be virtually a denial of the attributes and perfections of God? To such question what reply can be given? From God's foreknowledge it is certain he knew that evil would exist, from his forming both men and angels free agents it is certain he permitted it to exist, and believing that there was an infinitude of duration before the creation of the universe, when the Deity dwelt alone, we believe he then laid in wisdom, from eternal fitness,—the train of creations vast events, including the latent germ of evil, but in such a way as that all might display his attributes to innumerable beings, work for his own glory, and the ultimate good of his whole universe. But tenaciously to advocate the doctrine that he, arbitrarily by a direct and specific act of volition, brought that evil into being which caused the angelic revolt in heaven and the fall of man upon earth, were to advocate an opinion which man cannot prove, and which cannot in some measure, harmonize with the attributes of the Creator himself. As he is from eternity, his means are infinite and his

ends often remote, and in pronouncing so decisively upon his vast plans, we plunge recklessly in an unfathomable ocean of mysteries.

And were it not for our revealed knowledge, in descending from the events of heaven to the events of earth and time, and considering the existence of evil in the world, the same difficulties besetting the origin of evil in heaven, would, as we have already seen, beset our endeavours at finding a solution; as it will be seen that the question of how evil was first generated in the eternal world, can be no easier answered than the question of how evil was first generated in Eden. We have seen how far in the heathen world, and even in modern times, human reason can go towards a consistent solution of the mystery, and learnt that from scripture, and scripture alone a correct explanation can be given.

We have already seen that Adam and his consort were placed in the garden of Eden to keep it and dress it, and that accordingly, abundance of all things necessary for their subsistence and comfort was everywhere around them. Immortality was mirrored upon their brows, and the air they breathed, the fruit they plucked, and the water they drank, were every way in happy accordance with their prospects of enduring life. Enjoyment was rich and unceasing, because love was their being. God had to them revealed the nature of their duties—the obedience he should at all times expect them to yield to his desires, the eternal life of happiness, and the reward they would obtain if faithful to the trust assigned them, and the punishment they should inevitably draw down upon themselves if they over-

stepped the limits of the rigid interdiction placed by himself against their eating of the fruit of that tree placed in the middle of the garden;—thus their duties were plain and easily understood. It was spoken to them in language clearly defined, and not wrapped up in clouds, through which they had to pierce in order to find it. All was simple and capable of only one construction, so that no inference of an opposite nature could possibly be drawn from it. Thus the law was clear and the obedience required easy and simple. Without obedience they could expect nothing but death, with it they had every prospect of eternal enjoyment through the favour of God—an enjoyment and a favour, the exalted nature of which in this dim region of changing mortality, we can but dimly apprehend. We reason from analogy, and demonstrate the Being and attributes of God from the phenomena of the material universe and the operations of his spirit; Adam held intimate communion with his maker, and could no doubt in some measure comprehend the glory of his nature, the extent of his benevolence and love, without running through a long chain of categories, or building evidence upon the disputatious ground of dubious syllogisms. Hence they would have some perception of that immortality which awaited them in case of obedience, and though they might not so clearly comprehend the nature of that death so strongly and irrevocably denounced against them in case of transgression; with understandings so clear as their's must have been, they would naturally judge of it by the opposite nature of the glory which would last for ever if they kept their first estate.

From what has been revealed to us concerning the character of Satan, we may be certain that the determination to corrupt the innocent minds of the inhabitants of this new world, blooming beneath the smile of eternal love, once formed in hell, no means by which he could gain his end would be left untried. As the angel of greatest distinction in heaven before he was cast from its battlements, there is little reason for supposing that his power was diminished, though his nature was changed, and all his passions once holy, turned into malignant hatred, burning envy and implacable revenge. Hence a knowledge of this new formed world, and its newly created inhabitants holy and happy, and standing in such envious contrast to his own world of woe, aroused his wrath, awoke into activity all the cunning of his nature, and strung afresh his energies to endeavour to corrupt them, and so cloud their prospects—annihilate their earthly immortality, and by so doing, wreak at the same time his horrid revenge against the Omnipotent himself.

It may seem strange, however, to some, how Satan by tempting our first parents into sin, could revenge himself against his own and their Creator. As the most conspicuous angel in heaven before the expulsion, he must have known that God immutable, could sustain no diminution of his happiness, no change in his nature, or in the government of his universe, either from his own fall or the fall of the innocent beings against whom his beguiling snares were laid. But as he himself had sinned and been cast from heaven, and was now sunk with his apostate legions in endless perdition, without hope,

of the least alteration of his woes ; so he now concluded, no doubt, that by sharing with God the obedience of the Lord of the new created world and his subsequent offspring, he would not only in some measure be revenged for his own overthrow, but also, as he knew that he and his host of apostates could never be restored to their former distinction in heaven, so he might also imagine that rebellious creatures of a lower nature, once fallen, could no more be restored than himself ; and that thus, could Adam be only brought to violate the command of God, and eat of the forbidden fruit, he might draw him and all his posterity virtually within his grasp. The scheme once determined in hell, no time was lost in trying to put it into execution, and no plans, however mean, were too low for the tempter to try. He had lost his integrity and truth, and was now the essence of falsehood ; he had lost the simple dignity and beauty of holiness, and was now the essence of rebellious wickedness and hate ; his love was hence turned into malignity and revenge, and his hope into despair. Entering thus into Eden, where guile nor suspicion had ever blighted either the natural or the moral prospect, he chose by his spirit to enter into and animate a serpent, the subtlest beast of the field, which he endowed with speech, and which thus, by the cunning blandishments of its tongue and the yet well known fascination of its eye, was more likely to overcome the scruples of innocence, than any of the other animals of Eden.

The time and the manner of temptation were alike remarkable ; had the apparent serpent attacked Adam and Eve when together, they by mutual helps

to each others faith and confidence in God, and their compliance with his rigid commands, might have effectually resisted his insidious temptation; but too well he knew his plans and his method of performing them. Eve as the weaker vessel he attacked when alone, and we suppose, in the very vicinity of the tree, whose forbidden fruit when once tasted, was certain to result in the introduction of death;—he did not attack her with that daring boldness and license of speech, which might have, in some measure, been expected from his character, as by so doing he knew he might raise her alarm, and defeat his own projects, and thus himself and his host still remain the only apostates in the universe. But his first exclamation being that of apparent surprise at the command of God with regard to that particular tree, the woman probably unconscious of the angelic revolt, and having hence, no suspicion of the real character of the insidious tempter, and wondering perhaps, at the animal possessing speech, would also naturally begin to wonder at the nature of the tree so specially set apart. When she therefore informed the serpent of the interdiction, that God declared emphatically, “ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die!” and heard the subtle serpent in return, with all the seductive blandishments of cunning, declare, “Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (or angels), knowing good and evil,” it is easy to conceive how she would be excited. She saw the beauty of the tree, and from the nature of other fruits, would naturally imagine the surpass-

ingly exhilarating influence of that tree so specially interdicted ; but her natural palate was not alone excited to taste the fruit. If she and her consort held communion with angels, she would consequently have some knowledge of their character and dignity, and hence, her ambition to become as one of them would be excited. This was the predominant trait in the character of Lucifer himself, which caused his own expulsion from heaven, and hence, he knew the easiest way to draw them from God. She might naturally wonder at the information of the serpent being so much superior to her own ; and the manner in which Milton imagines the serpent to account for it, namely, by himself eating of the forbidden fruit, would be to her a convincing proof,—a practical exemplification of the truth of his own bold assertions. This is, of course imaginary, but quite probable, as much more conversation must have taken place than is set down in holy writ. Again, ambition, when once kindled, seldom finds a resting place, a summit or crown to its desires ; the probabilities against our success are counterbalanced by the burning desire to rise, and transgression against the moral laws of heaven is forgotten in the intoxicating views of future elevation and success. Eve thus in desiring further knowledge, and to reach the high elevation of angels, was led to forget the obedience she owed to God, to whom, indeed, she might now attribute a feeling of jealousy, as the motive prompting him to keep her and her husband in a state of comparative ignorance, by thus commanding them not to eat of that particular tree. And jealousy, once kindled, would naturally lead the

way to suppositions injurious to the character of God. The way was thus ready prepared for the actual commission of the crime—the train was laid ready for the explosion. Rebellion once admitted into the heart, soon, unless instantly suppressed, manifests itself through the conduct. Eve thus, neglectful of duty, neglectful of prayer and rushing upon death, committed the deed of transgression. She plucked of the forbidden tree and did eat, and according to scripture, “gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat.”

Here then sin commenced its reign upon earth—here the bright moral prospect of the world was robed in clouds, the light of innocence with the darkness of guilt. He who was the only lie in this new world was diffusing his destroying principles—he who was the first blot upon the universe of God, by poisoning the fountain was tainting the stream of moral being with baleful pollution—he whose ambition aimed at the throne of the universe, emptied of his angelic glory but not robbed of his power, instead of holding open and undisguised war with angels was now the meanest and the basest of deceivers; instead of looking erect to God with an eye of light he crawled as a worm, and hating holiness wherever found because God was holy, and through envy and revenge determined, if possible, to thwart him in his apparent purpose wherever he could succeed, thus attempted and succeeded in the temptation of the parents of our race, from whose fall we must date the commencement of our sin; from the original corruption of whose nature has flowed in one continual course that stream of moral turpitude through

every heart, which has made the whole terrestrial creation groan and travail in pain even until now.

Concerning the disputed points of the freedom of mind and will with which Adam was created or endowed, and hence his power to stand or voluntarily by transgression to fall, little need here be hazarded in the shape of argument, because, as formerly stated, we are unable satisfactorily to comprehend it, any more than the original fall of angels, and are hence driven back again in our speculations to the first origin of evil in heaven. That, like the angels and his own succeeding progeny, Adam had perfect and entire freedom, none can successfully dispute, else why the conditions regarding his happiness or misery, his life or his death, as laid down so simply and clearly by his Creator. Why state conditions or terms of agreement or compromise to beings under the spell of fatalism? Surely the Deity would never lay down terms or conditions regarding either obedience or disobedience with beings formed in his own image, whom he at the same time had placed under the controul of a necessity towards a certain line of action, irrevocably and eternally fatal. If God gave Adam, through *sufficient* grace, power to stand, but yet in the moment of temptation withdrew from him that grace, without which he was unable to resist actual sin, then, according to his own eternal law of equity, Adam was not a responsible, because essentially not a free agent; and the very fact of Adam's being punished for sin committed under such circumstances, would of itself openly impeach the justice of the divine law and government. But Adam was free, and he felt it—

conditions regarding his happiness or misery were laid before him, and he clearly understood them. And though from all eternity in the unfathomable profounds of God's own divine nature and attributes the created universe existed, and he had predetermined the nature and conditions of all worlds, and the varying course of events in all ages to take place in each, and the affairs of every individual being merely sentient and intelligent to inhabit them in their, to us, countless millions, yet the fact of his necessary foreknowledge did not in the least degree detract one jot from the freedom of the angels in heaven or Adam and his posterity upon earth. They were not created evil, but holy and uncorrupted. 'Through their very freedom of choice, they fell and became sinful; and is it not unjust to charge that evil to the account of God which they, by their rebellion against him, first displayed in heaven and upon earth, and drew upon themselves the curse of perdition and death?

We read further, that when the transgression was consummated by Adam's partaking, at the instigation of Eve, of the forbidden fruit, the frown of incensed Deity hung over Eden. According to Milton, the earth itself, and the very elements around, seemed as if charged with grief:—

“ Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan.
Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original.” *Paradise Lost.*

God himself descended to the scene of their guilt,

where they already, from its effects, ashamed to see him or be seen by him, hid themselves among the trees of the garden. Here he pronounced his unchangeable sentence upon all. First he pronounced it upon the serpent, literally, as the creature originally guilty. It was to be cursed above all cattle, above every beast of the field; to go grovelling upon its belly, and eat dust all the days of its life. Thus we know by experience that the literal meaning of the sentence has been exactly fulfilled. Before the fall, the serpent is supposed to have been an animal of superior wisdom, distinguished, as such, above all others, endued with wings and extremely beautiful. Hence the curse, that it should go grovelling upon its belly, was a mark of miserable degradation, evincing the extreme abhorrence of the Almighty for sin; and pronounced, as it was, previous to those pronounced upon Adam and Eve, and in their immediate presence, would naturally show them that the word of God was unchangeable, and that the threatened punishment was sure to be awarded. He would put enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent. Hence a perpetual war has been waged by man against every species of the serpent kind in every part of the world through all generations, and yet there is no cessation. So insidious and cunning are they by nature, so quick are all their movements, and so fascinating their eyes, even when luring to destruction, that they have been hated with a peculiar hatred, their very names becoming synonyms for duplicity and treachery; and though little more than one-seventh are armed for destruction, all seem included in the curse. The Swedish

Naturalist Linnæus, according to Paley, enumerates two hundred and eighteen different kinds of serpents and vipers, only thirty-two of which are venomous. But all being marked with the universal curse, seem, in themselves, a signal evidence of the truth of the Scripture record of the first earthly origin of sin.

Such seems to be the literal meaning of the sentence pronounced upon the serpent. But the figurative meaning of the sentence pronounced upon it as representing, or being animated by Satan, the fallen Archangel, is of greater magnitude; nay, of infinite importance in time and through eternity. Whether or not he understood the full import of the ominous words, that the seed of the woman should bruise his head, we cannot know; but, doubtless he would expect some great change, by his own insidious mischief, to be made in his own region of darkness, and be visited personally upon himself—a change or punishment, indeed, to be visited upon him by some descendant of the very woman he deceived, all of whose offspring would hold a perpetual conflict with him in the world. It is evident, however, from his conduct, that he knew or strongly suspected the divine character and mission of Christ upon earth; and even then was desirous of ruining, not only his redeeming enterprise, but of ruining himself. And when, through the traitor Judas, he deemed the plans of God frustrated, and his own triumphant, he was only fulfilling the plans of his master for bruising his own head,—for the redemption of the world from his thralldom, and the opening up of the kingdom of grace for the believing and faithful of all nations and kindreds and tongues. Thus in dying and

making atonement for the sins of the people, in issuing from the grave, and leading captivity captive, Christ, the seed of the woman, the descendant of Eve through many generations, and after the lapse of four thousand years, baffled the Jesuit cunning, the malicious rage, and implacable enmity of Satan; lowered his dignity, abridged his power, turned his pride into gall, and increased the very wretchedness of that hell whose dismal regions already echoed with the wailings of the lost. Here also could no other evidence be found, the life and death of Christ, connected with his character and the nature of his mission, would place the truth of the Scripture record of the fall, and the consequent birth of evil in the world, upon an incontrovertible foundation.

The sentence pronounced upon Eve, the second in guilt, is likewise of a character which existing proofs tell us came immediately from God, and is, hence, in exact conformity with his declaration. "I," says he, "will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and *he shall* rule over thee." From this sentence we may learn that, had she not yielded to the temptation, the propagation of her race would have been comparatively unattended with pain and suffering. But, under sin, woman has in all ages and nations, and among all tribes, been distinguished above all sentient beings for her sorrow and sufferings in bringing forth her kind. The queen upon the throne and the beggar in the hut have sorrow alike, and no antidote can wholly relieve it—no aid, no inven-

tion can alleviate so as effectually to change its course. The word of God is here the standard and test of truth.

Again, look to the second part of the sentence—subjection to her husband. In the paradisiacal state she was his equal, now she was his inferior. In all climates and countries her sorrows arising from this have been great. Christianity has modified it—in some parts has almost extinguished it; but still being inherent in nature as flowing from the fall, it is one of the grand evidences of Scripture truth. In some nations, partially civilized, so far as arts and sciences without a clear knowledge of divine truths can civilize them, she is marked by many as a creature merely to satisfy their lusts. • In savage nations, again—and how many nations can be characterized as other than savage?—she partakes of the character of the slave, and is reduced to extreme humiliation and distress. Her weakness has been triumphed over by the stronger sex, to whom in many parts she is a mere drudge, a minister to his pleasures, a slave to his brutishness and sloth. In some savage countries they have been induced to murder their female children, in order to prevent their rise to womanhood, and becoming exposed to sufferings equal to their own. Look to China, to Hindostan and Persia, and other eastern countries, and in some respects their condition is little better. Or look to countries more fully under the influence of Mahomedanism, where they are at times exposed like cattle in the markets, thrust into a sensual tyrant's harem—imprisoned, perhaps, for life; or, if

suffered to move abroad, compelled to cast over features the seat of beauty a veil to keep them from the gaze of the passing crowd.

The sentence passed upon Adam next claims attention;—toil and sorrow were henceforth to be his lot; all scenes or changes of which were to be ended by death. Previously the earth brought forth its fruits in profusion without toil or humiliation, now Adam was to eat his bread with the sweat of his brow. Labour was not, therefore, as formerly a pleasure and voluntary, but a judgment bitter with the leaven of sorrow. The passions, heretofore well toned and harmonious, now jarred in discord. Heretofore the animals sported around both our parents in Eden, now all fled at their approach. Heretofore angels held communion with them, now cherubims and a flaming sword were placed at the east of the garden to keep the way of the tree of life. Formerly they could look forward to an immortality of being, now death the cessation of that being was to supplant that immortality of earthly bloom and bliss. Both were beforetime happy, because holy, now both were miserable because sinful. They were hence driven forth upon the world, that world upon which thorns and briers were to spring up, and henceforth to groan and travel in pain through the guilt of their awful apostacy from their maker.

The world is therefore in ruins, so says Scripture, so says reason, so say the traditions of nearly all ancient nations; and traditions which—like those upon the golden age and the deluge—so universal and harmonious, and among peoples so far distant

from each other, among Indians and Greeks, Phœnicians and Jews, could not reasonably exist without at first being founded upon unquestionable truth. That the evil, therefore, which has desolated time and peopled eternity, which has drawn from heaven and peopled hell, is of no artificial creation we may rest assured. When the root and core of the tree is diseased and dried up the whole must soon wither and decay. So, when man's heart is corrupt and impervious to good, no rank or distinction, no artificial law or code of laws, nothing short of a change of heart through the Redeemer can purify its propensities and hallow its desires. Evil springs from no form of government, as held forth by some, as all existing governments can only be artificial, acting in conformity with and based upon pre-existing human nature,—from no connection with matter, as voluntary beings alone can be capable of either virtue or vice,—from none of the schemes of infidelity whatever, the creations of morbid spirits bent upon shutting the Creator from his own universe, clouding its moral beauty and turning order into chaos. Evil springs and has ever sprung from the corruption of our nature as flowing originally from Adam. It is inherent in the human heart—the fountain whence has arisen the streams of pollution which taint the very atmosphere of life. Man feels and understands this, and has in all ages offered up expiatory offerings at the shrines of the Gods. Whether we go back to the polytheists of Greece, or the fire-worshippers of Persia,—whether to the Druids of ancient Britain or the Hindoo worshippers of Juggernaut, the case is the same. Man feels

himself to be no creature of destiny. Whence this worship, this sacrifice, a times of life itself,—this offering of blood to a power they know not, and whose attributes they can but vaguely conjecture,—but from an inward knowledge that they themselves are guilty, and that guilt alone can be washed away by sacrifice? Thus the theory of the gospel itself, clouded with ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, has from the first been shadowed forth significantly, though darkly in the human mind.

Whether or not the introduction and diffusion of evil over the earth, will, in the end, be shewn to have been essential for the everlasting good of the whole universe we cannot determine. From what we know of the truth, the goodness, and the mercy of God, as exemplified to the world, and through his Providence as shewn forth in Scripture, we have every reason to believe it will be so. We cannot conceive, with some, how the mere existence of evil seems incongruous with the attributes of God. Here, however, we are but mere specks upon an illimitable ocean of intelligent existence, and our capacities commensurate with the spheres we occupy and fill. We cannot pry into the scheme of the universe or the fathomless recesses of infinitude and pronounce upon their eternal merits. We may attempt to survey a constellation, and then descend from our telescopic view to contemplate the ringlet of a worm, the iris of the human eye, or the infusoria in a drop of water; but can we thoroughly comprehend the lesser objects any more than the greater? Yet, some standing no more in relation to our own and surrounding worlds, than

the smallest invisible insect to the leaves of the tree it feeds upon, can attempt from their little mount of vision to scan immensity, to fathom the infinite mind of the Creator, and even, in some measure, to condemn his government and the scheme of his universe. We are in a state of probation—there is evil in the world, and hence they pronounce it a failure, and are sceptical regarding the moral attributes of God. But we may rest assured that the final causes of all which baffle reason here will be developed throughout eternity. At present we may venture to presume that virtue and holiness, as we comprehend the term, in relation to their opposites, could have no merit or positive existence upon earth, unless triumphing over selfish motives, corrupt propensities, and seductive temptations and sin. Probation means trial, and, without evil, we in our approaches to God, could have no temptation to resist, no worldly obstacles to overcome, to prove our desire or fitness to be through Christ among the ransomed of his flock. “God is love,”—but we could neither estimate his love aright, nor his justice, his truth nor his mercy, if we ourselves knew not that we were sinners “lost and ruined by the fall,” and reposing alone upon that love and proffered mercy for salvation. But we can only see a small part and must not judge the whole.

“One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
Through the dull medium of life’s feverish dream,
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem;

Oft from apparent ills our blessings rise ;
Oh, then renounce that impious self esteem,
Which aims to trace the secrets of the skies,
For thou art but of dust, be humble and be wise !”

—*Beattie's Minstrel.*

Christ is greater than Adam ;—the latter in this world would have been immortal had he not sinned, hence in that case neither he nor his posterity could have witnessed or become participators in the excellling glory of the redemption of Christ. They would, no doubt, have been pure and happy, and the earth one universal Eden ; but the attributes and glory of the most high in the most wonderful of all his works would have been unknown. But evil by gaining access into the world, and immersing it in darkness brought forth, or induced the development of all these attributes in their glorious brightness, to a redeemed and rejoicing race. Why four thousand years were allowed to elapse after the fall before Christ came upon earth, we cannot fully know. But before he shed forth his light the world was in ruins. Mankind, all possessed or impelled by some dreadful fatality, seemed, amidst the darkness of heathenism, as if engulfed in the bosom of night and advancing towards the verge of a dreadful precipice—the precipice of death—unconscious of their danger, but still looking anxiously forward and around for an outlet from the darkness. They gained the verge and were rolling in myriads into the gulf below, when first a star arose and then the sun rolled back the ebon night, and a voice was heard from the most excellent glory, “Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye perish ?” So amidst the paganism of the ancient world the “Son of righteousness

arose with healing on his wings ;” and while Satan “travelled like light from region to region and drank in the groan of creation’s travail,” the antidote was applied to cure the wounds of the fall. And thus the love and mercy of God through the redemption of the world, otherwise shaded from view, were displayed before the astonished universe, and will continue themes of song to all eternity. And whatever may be the modes of existence in other worlds, or whether they be affected by this stupendous scene in the great drama of divinity, we know not ; but we may be certain it is a theme which will engage angelic harps for ever, while the chains of the arch-rebel and his apostates will be doubly galling. It is a subject the angels desire to look into—a subject eternally unfolding itself in new and brighter aspects, and claiming higher honours and acclamations. Had there been no fall, there had been no redemption. Adam in paradise giveth glory to God, but Adam’s posterity saved by mercy and love triumphing over justice is the brightest jewel in Jehovah’s crown. God is glorified in creation, but creation is less glorious than redemption.

Redemption! ’tis the brightest gem
That gilds Jehovah’s diadem.
When from the sky worlds roll away,
Christ still will be his children’s stay ;
Still will he spread abroad his arms,
And shield them in their last alarms,
And point them to that world of rest,
Where, Adam’s offspring ever blest,
With joys, compared to which, on earth,
Even Eden’s bowers did ne’er give birth,—
Joys which the great eternal giver,
Has destined to increase for ever.

Though evil, therefore, has been universally diffused over the earth, we have no reason to think but that all is designed for the glory of God, and the good of his creatures. There are mysteries connected with its reign in the physical and the animal world, as well as in the moral nature of man: but, though mysterious to us, we cannot pronounce them blemishes upon the wisdom and sovereignty of God. What to us may appear an evil, may, upon the whole, be efficient for good. To think, otherwise, were practically to limit the power of God, and cast doubts upon his moral attributes. When he framed the world he made everything for use. In the distribution of his blessings, there cannot be found a tree, nor a shrub, however poisonous, nor a flower, nor a plant, however delicate their natures, or rich their textures, but have their useful qualities. The Simoon which sweeps the Arabian deserts with desolation and death, has its uses as well as the breezes that fan the British shores. The upas-tree whose breath is contagion, has its uses as well as the roses and violets that gem our garden walks. There is nothing wanting in the economy of the universe—nothing superfluous in its, to us, complicated machinery. The mite has its uses as well as the elephant; and the blade of grass acts the part assigned it, as well as the mountain. And not only is he, as sovereign ruler of the physical universe, all eye, all ear, all intellect, all power,—but as providential ruler, guide, and Saviour, through his Son, to its intelligent believers through all ages, he is all Love, all Mercy, all Justice and Truth. Alike present at once through all parts of his creation, and yet unseen and mysterious in the

inscrutable darkness of his divinity, he views with immutable complacency the tumults and agitations by which the empires of his created beings may be tossed or overthrown. Independent of all created matter and intelligence,—were the whole map of the universe blotted out, the change could not affect his existence, or mar his happiness. The smallest concerns of a fly, a mite, or an individual, are as much under his care as the vast whole of creation in the sum. Not a hair can fall from our heads, nor a blade of grass spring up under our feet, nor an animalcule perish in a drop of water, without his permission. With equal ease, and at a glance, he counts the number of the starry orbs, and the atoms of which each orb is composed. The tables of time cannot measure the epochs of his being, any more than the finite can ascend to the fountain of the infinite. “He takes a step, and ages roll away.” He changes the scenes, and new worlds and actors spring up, cross the stage, and retire into the all-engulphing abyss. And while the rise and fluctuation of events affect individuals or empires, kings, governors, or subjects, all are taking place in exact accordance with the purpose for which he ordained they should come to pass. He saw through all, both good and evil, from the depths of eternity. He acts and exists in all as they come to pass,³ and views with immutable satisfaction the absolute completion of all.

“ He sees with equal eye, as Lord of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,—
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl’d,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”

ON THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE.

THE great superiority of the material over the mental world, for openly proving the existence of a designing cause, has all along had the effect of keeping researches of an abstruse and metaphysical nature in the background of the argument. The invisibility of the latter constitutes its *apparent* inefficiency for exhibiting to all men its inalienable claims upon God as its designer. We feel it within us, and are intimately acquainted with all its movements; and yet, though felt and understood as the peculiar essence of life, and unfolding in its mechanism and workings indubitable evidence for all which theology can demonstrate,—it is a principle which to mankind, learned and unlearned, is altogether incomprehensible. Spiritual in its essence, it eludes the glance of material vision. Uncompounded, simple, and indivisible, it is incapable of clear definition, or of separation into parts; whilst in its sentient existence, as we feel it perform its functions through its agent the body, it is capable of exercising vast powers of thought, of influence over the forms and properties of matter, and over the minds of others. In all its passions it vividly exhibits its earnestness and intensity,—and in the boundless range of its silent contemplations, its mysterious powers are exquisitely

felt; whilst the impenetrable darkness in which we are left as regards its nature, its substratum and actual destiny, inwardly impels us to seek relief from insoluble theorems, in one eternal self-existent Creator, in spirituality equally mysterious with itself. Scarcely, if ever, have two mental physiologists agreed in analysing its properties and modes of operation; whilst all, either more or less, have been made to feel the inscrutability of the subject which they tried to investigate. The gigantic greatness and variety of minds which have at different times expended their metaphysical acumen in defining its boundaries and its faculties, and showing its powers through its effects upon matter and society, without penetrating further than the visible arcana of things, alone through their own confessions show us the difficulty of the subject, and of the phenomena with which they had to grapple, and the utter inability of human power to solve the enigma enclosing it; for while they can show us the workings of its mechanism, they cannot penetrate the mystery of itself. Materialism has spent its theories in trying to penetrate its secrets in vain; and all that metaphysics can do, is, by the benevolent design seen clearly through all its movements, to show the evidences of its immateriality and immortality, and refer its essence to the Infinite Mind which alone can comprehend it.

That the existence of mind and matter is alike indemonstrable, is undeniable. That matter possesses certain properties by which it becomes distinguishable to our perceptive faculties, and acts in a certain manner upon the organs of sense, which again react upon the internal percipient the mind, and produces.

certain states of feeling or emotion, is all which we are capable of comprehending. And that mind possesses certain properties, or is the subject of certain affections, which stand in intimate relation to each other, and of which we are conscious in their successive alternations, is all that we can ever possibly discover. Whatever new discoveries may be made in the material world, and however they may stand in relation to ourselves, the material substratum will remain as much a mystery as ever; and if we could conceive ourselves as adding to the already known qualities of mind an hitherto unknown property or attribute, it could be nothing more than a certain state of feeling, or a certain affection or emotion, of which we were hitherto unconscious, while the mental substratum was still undiscovered.

But even though our knowledge of matter and of mind be limited to the phenomena each relatively exhibits to our own external and internal perceptions, it were vain for us to attempt the annihilation of our belief in their existence, or to believe the material universe around us nothing but the product of certain affections arising in and influencing the mind. That the existence of matter can only be known to us through the medium of our senses, as existing in relation to mind, is all the proof we can possibly possess; and proof sufficient to command our universal assent to its truth, as mankind have never been deceived in their inherent faith in its existence. This belief is intuitive, and exists in the mind prior to all reason, or inductions of reason; and we tax our memory in vain when we attempt to remember the period when first conscious of its existence through

our sensations of sight, and touch, and taste. We proceed all along with that undying faith in its existence, though the phenomena it exhibits be all which is open to our perceptions, and the nature of the essence itself be enveloped in the deepest obscurity.

Of the existence of mind, it may be too much to say that the evidence is more direct and irrefragable; but, at all events, it is of a nature which we consider as placed altogether beyond the reach of sophistry or illusion; because the mind itself, even if scepticising on the existence and inherent qualities of matter, and struggling, with Berkeley and Hume, to conceive all for a time as only existing in certain states or affections of the mind, cannot, at the same time, but be conscious of its own existence and identity, ~~as~~ to doubt of our own existence, when possessed of consciousness, were a glaring contradiction. To feel that we are, and to be conscious of thinking, and of being the subject, at different times, of various states of feeling—of hoping and fearing, of loving and hating certain objects awakening the emotions,—implies a knowledge of our own sentient existence, which no sophistry can weaken or annihilate, however sceptical we may become with regard to the existence of the material world, the subject of the varying phenomena we see.

The nature and rightful supremacy of the great moral faculty of the mind, apart from the intellect, the will, and the emotions, is not so much the subject of a mental as of a moral and ethical inquiry! and whether or not conscience can be considered as a mere intellectual or emotive faculty, or an adjunct

inseparable from both, is not a question of so much interest to our present inquiry, as whether it holds supreme sway over all, and is universally recognised as governor, in all parts of the world. If it does not now possess the actual power over the mind, the will, and the heart of man, no one can deny but that it possesses the lawfulright and authority to rule, even over the rebellious passions, which may for a time have gained a practical ascendancy over it. In the midst of mental and moral anarchy it keeps its throne, though its law be held in abeyance, its sceptre be swayed for a season in vain, and its authority be trampled upon. Its design in the moral constitution of man is, clearly, to rule; and though man has fallen, and his moral and mental characteristics have lost their original brightness, conscience has no more lost its actual right, its regal authority to rule supreme, than has the regulator of a watch, or the helm of a ship, lost its original design or power, because the machinery of the watch may be deranged, and the ship in a wrecked condition, and incapable of proper motion. In each case the skill and original object and design of the maker and builder are still seen and admired for their tendency and usefulness, though the damage sustained by both prevents their perfect operation and a display of their actual power. "Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."*

Considered in any light, the silent intimations of this internal monitor clearly evidence the being and

* Bishop Butler. Sermons at the Rolls.

attributes of God. Though, as some imagine, it may not so clearly shew forth his actual existence, as that truth being assumed, it demonstrates to the inner man, the benevolence and goodness of his moral attributes, it urges us forward in quest of a solution to that problem, which must henceforth become an axiom in the volume of the heart. In the whole circle of life, from the cradle to the grave, in influencing or restraining in approving or condemning, the various actions which we have performed, it reveals its authority to every mind, as the arbiter and judge of all our actions, whether virtuous or vicious. And though when considered distinctly apart from the intellect and the emotions, it may not exhibit such clear proofs of design, as are displayed by all the faculties in union and subordination ; when considered as influencing, and approving or condemning all, it rises and becomes invested with a power, at times as supreme as its legal authority, and reveals in high, and it may be, in terrible relief, the design for which it is throned as rightful governor in the moral constitution of man. When we know that to do virtuously and justly in all things, is only right, and that it prompts us to the commission of those actions, and spreads over the mind the complacency attendant upon a high approval when performed ; and when we know that to do evil is contrary to the statutes of a high morality, and that it warns us emphatically against its commission, and corrodes the heart with pangs of remorse and terror, if we indulge in its performance, we feel that it is a moral governor designed to rule over the subordinate faculties ; and designed more-

over to teach by is tendency, and the clear language it enunciates to the inner man, what is the character of that God who placed its throne in the heart, and gave it an authority and a right to promulgate his own laws, pronounce his own verdicts, and become his own vicegerent in rewarding and punishing all who obey or disobey his will.

It speak loudly for the character of God, then, when it importunes us with one irresistible and unchanging voice, amidst all our associations, to respect and pay due deference to the sacred laws it promulgates ; and to abstain from crime and injustice, as exercised against ourselves and our fellow beings, and to place our happiness in the faith of that eternal and universal truth impersonated in, and reflected from, the Godhead through the mirror of this conscience placed in every human bosom. Were we the creatures of a malevolent Deity, would the universe be as full of music, possess so many of the elements of happiness ? virtue be so eminently exalted, and vice be so universally depreciated ? And would not conscience in all its characteristics be wholly inverted and changed, so that falsehood and vice and crime, would meet with approval, and swell the heart with a fiendish gladness ; and virtue in her every shape, and truth and goodness and love, be universally execrated, and lacerate the feelings and wring the heart and the conscience with woe and remorse, when urging us to actions of a corresponding nature ; when everything, therefore, is of an opposite nature, and the law of conscience appreciates all that, which in our nature, has a tendency to exalt humanity, to lead mankind to love, to truth, and

eternal goodness, and condemns all injustice and cruelty, falsehood and fraud, we, on the other hand have every ground for inferring his goodness and benevolence, as we had, in the other case, for inferring his malevolence. And where we find that it is not locally created, as Hobbs would have religion and virtue, by the civil enactments of nations, but is in itself, a code of laws, reigning universally in every breast, and influencing and directing all human law, who can resist the conclusion of the oneness and *unity* of the Creator, pressed upon us by the fact of the inherent sway of this legislative principle throughout the earth. "It is not," say Cicero, "one law at Rome and another^{at} Athens; one at present and another hereafter; but among all nations and in all time, it will remain one eternal and immutable law."

That it should have been so,—that from the first creation of primæval man, this monitor should have spoken in language, though silent yet sublime, of the existence and character of the lawgiver who engraved this law upon the tablet of the heart, which is the guide and arbiter of all our actions, and the judge at whose tribunal they must be tested; that it should have been so universal in its influence, dwelling in every heart, and diffused wherever humanity extends; that not only in countries and ages when civilization and refinement diffused their luxurious blessings, but in times and in empires, where amidst paganism and licentiousness an almost universal moral darkness enveloped the globe, it should have reigned supreme; that neither kings nor courtiers, warriors nor statesmen should have

been exempted from its paramount obligations ; that neither a Nero, a Caligula, a Liberius, nor a Robespierre, even when plunged amidst their most sanguinary crimes, should have been exempted from its lashes ; and that in the almost inaccessible amplitudes of the wilderness and the forest, where the untutored savage amidst his tribe conceives himself placed upon an equality with the greatest monarchs of the earth ; its voice should have found an echo, and command an ascendancy, even more powerful than in the most civilized nations, is wonderful, showing that though He who rules the universe shrouds himself in clouds and darkness, He has not left himself without witnesses in the bosom of his creatures.

One of the arguments brought forth by our opponents on the side of scepticism, is, that conscience is not an original primitive faculty, but derived, in conjunction with our other moral characteristics, however coloured or bent, from external circumstance, the nature of our education, and the nature of the national laws ascendant over us, as condemnatory of those vices and crimes which oppose the well being of the state.

According to this dogma of Hobbes and partly of Mandeville, virtue and vice are the mere creations and playthings of state policy and expediency, and conscience itself, instead of being a lawgiver and a judge, becomes a slave and bends itself to all the shiftings and chicanery of human legislation. The circumstances in which during our youth we may be placed, the nature and extent of our education, and the character and policy of the national govern-

ment, must undoubtedly mould our minds and influence our conduct in some degree, even in spite of ourselves. Compare the Russian serf with the free Englishman and the truth becomes immediately apparent. Had we been born in India of Hindoo parents we might have been the slaves of caste and worshippers of Juggernaut. Had we been born in Turkey we might have been Mahometans; or if born Arabs of the Desert we might have become attached to their predatory habits of life in the wilderness, and shunned the crowded abodes and pathways of civilization. But so long as the law of conscience does not in any respect depend upon country or birth, no state of society, no religious creed, no state policy or system of legislation, whether arbitrary or otherwise, can abrogate its rightful authority, though it may lessen its actual power. Over and above all the accidents of birth, education and society, and the prejudice and bigotry thence engendered, the mind free and untrammelled in its range, can change at its will from that line of conduct which jars with the moral regulator within, to that to which all the feelings and faculties shall give a respondent echo. If in the midst of that mental jarring so fiercely aroused when we contemplate with horror any action or actions which we had committed, we felt any emotions of an opposite nature soothing us, and in our own estimation exonerating us from blame, because though voluntary agents, we were yet wholly the creatures of circumstances, then might we doubt the rightful authority, the truthfulness, and the constitutional inherency of conscience. But this we know is

inverted. We feel that we have a freedom of will to act or refrain from acting, and an infinite knowledge of right and wrong shadowed forth in the mind previous to, and independant of, our knowledge of the laws of nations. And, in fact, the laws of nations instead of creating, influencing, and directing, virtue and conscience, are, or ought to be, based upon the code of laws which conscience enunciates; as that code is co-equal in its principles to, and based upon the moral law of God, as eternally inherent in his divine attributes. It is the collective minds of any nation which either make, sanction, or passively give enforcement to the laws of the nominal or virtual legislators at its head. They may either be passive under arbitrary restrictions, or active and free under an elective government, but still laws and institutions are found in accordance with the minds and the enlightenment of the people. In some cases and ages it may be that laws and institutions, according to the doctrine of Montesquieu, mould the opinions and the morals of Nations. But this frigid doctrine, which would preclude all change by keeping mind stationary until moved by institutions, is unnatural and opposed to truth. Mind must and is eternally advancing, though subject to innumerable checks. In arbitrary and despotic states where the people are nothing, and the divine right of the king is everything, institutions, subject to state scrutiny, are certainly moulded and directed by the ruling powers, and the fettered minds of the community are thus moulded by existing institutions; but when those people become more enlightened and free, and fling aside the incubus of oligarchical rule and tyranny, and time-worn institutions crumble into

decay, and the free-minded people erect the more noble political and moral institutions for themselves, and mould the opinions not only of their own, but shape, in some degree, the opinions of other ages. The people of any state or nation are, in truth, free or enslaved as they will it. If religion be made a weapon of state policy, a chain to bind the people, instead of ensuring by its diffusion peace and goodwill among the nations, the people, with few exceptions, are indeed wrapt in comparative darkness. And if any society or community of men be so darkened as to believe that virtue and conscience are only created by state policy, and that under a different form of government, the dictates and judgments of the heart would be different, then also must these people be enslaved. But we are assured that so long as the laws and institutions of any free nation reflect the minds and morals of the millions composing it, those laws and institutions of whatever kind have either been formed and established in accordance with their united wills, or been modified to fit their increasing wants and changing views, or, in former ages, have been wisely adapted to the many phases of human nature for succeeding generations. Virtue must be personal in all, before it can become personified in the habits and institutions of any people; and before it can become ascendant in the heart and shape the conduct, and it must draw forth the concurring applause of conscience.

And when, in the high and sacred jurisprudence of Heaven, as it acts and reacts in the minds of men upon earth, there is no law so potent in its universal power, its rightful sway, and its commanding influ-

ence as the law of conscience; it seems to be almost a violation of reason, to assign to it a place among those subsidiary instincts of our nature which education, circumstances, or the laws of nations may influence or change, while the great master faculty of all is throned above the fluctuations of human affairs. It is the spirit of eternal truth, breathing anterior to all reason or deductions of reason, because true reason can only be legitimately conducted upon the principles of rectitude which it invariably sets forth. Had it been a law deduced by our reasoning from external nature for the existence and character of God, or from the laws of nations, approving or condemning those principles and actions, upon which it pronounces the same verdict, much of our earlier years must have been passed in lawless insubordination, through our inability to penetrate and understand those truths and laws. Education, indeed, might have a tendency to arouse our apathetic minds to a sense of our condition and duty; but education can only command our acquiescence in the principles taught, in the same degree that conscience, even in youthful minds, admits their moral consistency with its own convictions. It is conscience, in fact, which convicts us, when itself is violated, and not the divergency from any standard of civil law, which creates conscience and then the subsequent conviction. Conscience slumbers until the understanding begins to develop itself, and then, even though almost in an embryotic state, it begins to exercise its sway over the inferior powers, and hold the balance of justice in an equitable manner between them. This we see mani-

fested in the knowledge by which children so early understand the rules of right and wrong, by which all their playful actions and petty delinquencies are measured. And this consciousness of the paramount claims of justice, to our perpetual regard, cannot be solely deduced from the civil laws of nations, ere the children themselves are capable of understanding those laws, and inferring such infallible conclusions from them as an unbiased conscience usually delivers. Nor is it impossible that the child, in his or her earlier years, can be capable of deducing, from the wonders and adaptations of nature to the sentient world, arguments for the existence and attributes of a Supreme Being, from the knowledge of whose existence and laws conscience may be supposed to spring. Yet all these absurd notions we must seriously entertain, before we can believe that conscience is not a primitive moral faculty, but derived, as some philosophers would have us believe, from the civil enactments of nations, and the impressions drawn from the harmony of nature's adaptations in our maturer years. Theory upon theory may be propounded to disprove its legitimate claims to primitive organization; but it instinctively speaks for itself. It rises from amidst a focus of merely human associations, and announces itself a law of which God is the correlative,—a law primæval, universal, and influencing all other laws, because having a supreme right over all,—a law which, in the human mind, as a transcript of the eternal, represents the nature of the mind from which it sprung; and, as the supreme governor of all our moral characteristics,

will remain through immortal ages, the judge by whose fiat we shall be irremediably condemned, or elevated to enjoyments more lofty, pure, and sublime.

As an objection to the universality and uniformity of the decisions of conscience, it has been urged that the same crimes do not always meet the same conscientious reprehension from the same individuals; and that, in some nations, those crimes and habits, which in others are held in abhorrence, are religiously observed and consecrated, and held up as triumphs of elevated feeling and devotion.

This, however, is not attributable to any diversity of moral decisions, because, in reality, there is no diversity, but to the different views which those individuals and nations take, at different times, of the same actions or creeds, as conducive to the welfare of themselves, the state, or the party to which they belong; and to the blinding influence which the love of gain, of possession, and power exercises over the human heart. We may be certain that, where there is a diversity of interests, there will be, also, a diversity in the views and opinions of those possessing them. Two statesmen may differ about the mode or principle of governing a nation, and each oppose the legislative enactments of his antagonist, but neither will seriously entertain the opinion that the country should not be well governed, and that the happiness of the people—which can only be secured by liberty, peace, and, their sure attendant, international prosperity—should not be the great end in view. In this case neither doubts nor declares that law is not necessary for the

government of the state, only each, by taking a different view of the question, differs about the mode of its application. Did either party know that the measures he was endeavouring to impose were incapable of producing the desired benefit, and yet, while possessing the power to do otherwise, shrunk, culpably, from the performance of his responsible duties, in preparing more beneficial laws, then their conduct is only reprehensible, while the moral characteristics are left entire.

The same line of argument may be illustrated by every human action or principle upon which a variety of judgments may be pronounced, differing in the minor points, but approximating by instinctive attraction to one great principle of truth. A number of slaveholders may entertain diverse opinions regarding the moral necessity for emancipating their slaves at a certain time; but there is not one who—though the lust of wealth urges the whole body on to the perpetuation of that accursed system—would seriously and conscientiously hold the doctrine, that a coloured race of Africans capable of civilization are, by natural right, the goods and chattels of the white Europeans, and that he holds the rightful prerogative to degrade them as they have been degraded, and subject them to the extreme of that captivity and torture to which they have so long bent a patient but unwilling neck. One planter may be benevolent, and another vindictive and cruel, but both will act upon the principles of humanity to their own immediate connections, nor dare to advocate the plea that justice and benevolence are vices, though they put that doctrine into

practical application by the barbarous policy enforced in their conduct to the wretched victims of their avaricious cruelty. They cannot deny the right of all men to all the immunities of freedom ; but still, by a distortion of conscience, they attempt to reason themselves into the flattering position that that right is limited, and can sleep soundly amidst the plenitude of nature's comforts, whilst the clanking of chains and the groans of their victims, writhing beneath the lash, fill the air with their appalling echoes. In all essential points, therefore, the moral decisions of the vindictive and the benevolent planter will be uniform, in regard to the general question of humanity, benevolence, and justice ; but avarice has darkened their moral perceptions, hushed the intonations of remorse within, and robbed conscience of a portion of her lawful power in their own bosoms, but has not, by any means, lessened her rightful authority.

Thus war, and the horrors of war, become, under the like distortion of moral convictions—which, in the minds of the planters, justifies slavery on the ground of the selfish philosophy—deified, as virtuous and magnanimous. None thinks war in itself a good, because all within reach of its devastations feel its consequences revolting to both the heart and the understanding ; nor think revenge, clothed in its lowest garb, a virtue, but that insulted honour requires corresponding aggression by the insulted party ; whilst the love of fame, that incentive to heroic achievement, impels the aspirant onwards in a career of blood and falsely estimated glory : all the finer feelings of his nature becoming, under the

crippled dominion of an aroused, but weakened and distorted conscience, the tablet upon which false views and impressions are temporarily engraved. Thus *Duelling*, that fashionable blot upon the moral escutcheon of our country, obtains its dire ascendancy—now, thank God, on the decline. Its active abettors obey not its murderous rules, through any belief that it is either virtuous, or just, or conscientiously necessary for the vindication of true honour, but by being born and educated in a country, and in a certain class of society, by which it is practised and partially tolerated, they find it, they think, in some cases necessary to vindicate a false principle, and shield themselves from being hooted as cowards from the pale of that society, whose smiles and frowns are as sunshine and darkness to the worldling and the fashionable *roué*.

But though conscience, in these cases, was shaded, and the actions were seen by the various parties engaged through different mediums, it kept its throne in all their breasts, and asserted, though often unheard, the rights and duties of its moral dominion. Actions, or principles of action, which in our youth we held in abomination, may, by a gradual declination into the sinks of vice, appear, in after-years, clothed in the garments of comparative pleasure ;—conscience becoming, as it were petrified and abiding a fearful awakening, redolent of horrors, corresponding with the extent of our delinquencies. Things which one nation or people abominate with horror, and are held up by others as objects of sacred observance, cannot be attributed to any arbitrary or peculiar bent of the moral regulator, any

more than the different animal appetites and tastes found in different countries can be attributed to any diversity of bodily organization. The remains of ancient customs, the influence of degrading superstitions, and the nature and extent of existing knowledge, shape and determine the opinions of various nations, and those classes of virtues preferred by each for the line and government of conduct through life. But never has conscience been so dethroned and perverted from truth, and never have any peoples led by or following such perversity, been taught to consider murder and robbery, and self-immolation, virtuous in themselves, and that love, and friendship, and Christian philanthropy were vices. When the Spartan lawgiver induced the youth of the state to steal, and severely punished those who were detected, it was not because he considered theft a virtue, but because it practised the youthful pillars of the state in manual dexterity and cunning. When the Hindoo is crushed beneath the wheels of Juggernaut, and the Hindoo widow perishes upon the funeral pile of her husband, it is only anticipatory of higher joys, and reuniting with those they love in a happier world. None of them consider the agonies of self-immolation and torture good in themselves, but a necessary step towards a higher good. Conscience, true to her office, holds the mirror of truth and virtue before their minds, which, amidst all that may seem opposing in principle and conduct, perceives, according to their light, what in reality, to a certain extent, is the true code of virtue and the opposing code of vice; and, as

swayed by interest, by passion, or by devotion, makes either code the rule of action.

To expect, in the present constitution of human nature, that all minds, in all parts of the world, will, in any age, view all things through the same medium were a speculative optimism, depending upon a transformation of soul and nature in every respect unwarranted by any view of the world, or any promise ever given by God to man. But were an universal education, sound and extensive in its principles, to shed its light into every human bosom, so that all would be capable of viewing for themselves, and comprehending, in all its forms and colours, so far as man can grasp it, the standard of divine truth, and their reasons for the hopes within them; then, from the centre to the ends of the world, though the same actions and principles be seen through many mediums, will conscience have more of actual power, as well as authority, and be clear and uniform in her decisions. Let all possess similar degrees of knowledge, and the same opportunities for tracing the springs and viewing the influence and effects of all human actions, then, from the equator to the poles, will it speak with the same uniform and consistent voice—immorality be universally condemned, and virtue be universally exalted—superstition be dragged from its den, and sacrificed upon the altar of intellectual and moral freedom—bigotry, and prejudice be extinguished, and the fell Moloch—war, that stalks amidst blood and carnage, be driven from the earth; and the whole moral economy of the globe be so trans-

formed, that a new era of humanity will seem as if dawning upon the sons of men, then capable of more clearly and fully comprehending whatever displays or shadows forth the benevolence of the Supreme Author of all.

ON THE INTELLECT AND THE EMOTIONS.

“Think not that all my thoughts are foolish, brother.
Oft have I wondered at the speaker’s power,
And listened as the singer’s quivering voice
Swept all the notes of melody, entrancing
In mental ecstasy the admiring throng,
And swaying their emotions with the breezes
Of her divinest harmony ; now rousing
Them into a rage, now melting them with pathos.
But most of all, the intellectual strength
Of reasoning man amazes me, and proves
How vast the mind that made men’s minds so vast !
How loving the Creator who creates
Affections to subserve our happiness,—
Emotions, which, when outwardly expressed,
Are types of inward hopes and trembling fears,
Of boiling anger and recoiling hate,
The furies of remorse and fixed despair !
Young I may be, but still such studies please me.
In thought and love my Maker loudly speaks,
And proves creation and himself as twain.”

JARVIS TUNSTALL.

THE scene of life and nature, like a moving stage,
upon which the actors perform their allotted parts
and then retire, is not adapted for the exercise of
conscience only, as conscience implies by its very

name and nature the existence and active play of faculties over which it rules, and, as such, must have subjects ere it can exercise its judicial authority. The intellectual faculties and the emotions kept in active play when fully awakened into life by surrounding objects, and the objects of imagination, have each their especial adaptations to counterpart objects in the universe. The great family of mankind, of which we are members, and the various relationships and duties arising from our mutual fellowship with each other in all the scenes and circumstances of life, give us abundant scope for their exercise and display. And then, as if designedly purposed for meeting the inherent desires of the mind for objects of diversified contemplation, when withdrawn from the more immediate objects of domestic and social intercourse, we find the material world, considered by itself and connected with other sections of the created universe, eminently adapted to minister harmoniously to all the wants and gratifications of the greatest and noblest minds; and objects multiplied in an infinite degree, to afford exercise and enjoyment to all the animal senses. Nor is this all. There is also sufficient scope on every side for the constant and open exercise of the moral faculties, which, ever active and on the wing, possess a perpetuity of being which the more intellectual are not called upon to exert. From experience we learn that those of the intellectual domain may slumber, even amidst the bustle and turmoil of the world, while the moral faculties, kept under control by the dictator, Conscience, never are in a state of actual torpidity,

but coloured at all times with the reflecting hues of good and evil principles, are kept in ceaseless activity throughout all the stages of human existence.

As, apart from consciousness, we can have no conception of mind unless through the material world, we find mind symbolised in all that is external to ourselves. Whilst we find the supreme mind symbolised in every department of the framework of the universe and of man,—we find, in every human triumph over the forms and properties of matter, in the chisel of Phidias, the brush of Apelles, the telescope of Galileo, and the steam-engine of Watt, the incarnations of mind, the genius of man, spiritualising matter, causing the canvas to live, the marble to breathe, the stars to descend, and the polished metal to become all but instinct with intelligence. Hence, even when descanting upon its wonders, we can only conceive of mind as being the negation of matter, by its symbols and analogies decipher its qualities, and by its influence and wonder-working powers become cognisant of its tendencies and its immortal ambition. The adaptation of its varied powers and emotions to the material world, and to society at large, forms one of the noblest displays of Omniscient design and goodness. Though essentially invisible to the eye, it yet, by its actions, becomes, in its effects, both visible and tangible. Action, in truth, is nothing but the mind speaking through the bodily organs and producing the effects of its will. And that which cogitates and wills, and acts according to its will, must be a principle containing within itself the attributes of design, implanted by a being extraneous to itself, adequate to its production, and

intimately acquainted with all the various offices which it was originally intended to fulfil.

In specifying a few of the more direct adaptations which obtain between the intellectual faculties and the material world and existing society, we may mention *curiosity* as the first impelling power or principle for inciting us after knowledge, either for the simple gratification of the mind itself, or for subserving the purposes of utility in the inventive and industrial concerns of life. This is, indeed, one of the principal mainsprings of all prosperity and progress in society. By its impulses we enlarge our sphere of existence, elicit truths, chronicle past events and form histories, form scheme upon scheme for our own aggrandisement and the progress of society, plunge deep through science into palpable and abstract phenomena, and even hold commerce with the skies; and by the promptings of which, each, following the bent of his individual idiosyncracies, travels in the pathway of progressive civilisation. This, in truth, is the first principle which, in childhood, marks our superiority to the brute creation, and by its healthy and regular action well applied, elevates the man into the statesman, the philosopher, and sage.

Attention—is a frame of mind characterised by a concentration of all the faculties when our inquiries are directed to any particular object, or when we listen, with earnestness to the delivery of an oration or public discourse, by some eminent speaker. There is no state of mind so difficult to exercise as this, as it requires a full command over all the elements and waywardness of thought, and a reining in and

fettering of the imagination; to a rambling fanciful mind an almost impossible restraint. But such a control, only to be exercised after severe discipline, is of great and absolute moment, as it is by the exercise of an attentive eye, ear, and mind, upon all the objects and events around us, and upon all the methods by which information can be obtained, that we can either imbue our minds with the attributes of learning, traverse the labyrinths of science, or hoard up through the channels of manufacture or commerce, the gains of persevering industry and adventure.

Memory—a combination of internal perception and attention to passing events, and to visible objects around us, kept in lively exercise by the law of relative suggestion, is that faculty by which past events and distant objects are again brought vividly before the eye of the mind. The events of childhood are vividly re-pictured before the mental eye of the man of maturer years, bearing in their train not only all the coincident associations themselves, but even, in some degree, followed by the feelings of pleasure or pain accompanying them. The hoary-headed veteran of seventy years, taking a retrospective glance at his past life, has his mind enlightened and filled with a mingling flood of past associations, awakening into a pleasant melancholy the chords of his almost extinguished feelings, as he retraces, step by step, the progress of his past life, and recalls the forms of early friends, and the endearments binding him to those who have filled their allotted span of life and departed hence. The child remembers and loves, though with a lacerated heart, to dwell upon the

affections and tender solicitude of the departed parent; and the parent upon the opening affections and endearing fondness and confidence of the departed child. What a flood of light of bygone days will a single suggestion call up from the storehouse of memory! What an array of events, long since matter for the historian, and what a train of thoughts and images of things that once were, and of beings that once breathed, does an hour's reminiscence upon the years of past life bring suddenly, like enchantment, before us! Memory is thus, to well-cultivated minds, the very encyclopædia or storehouse of experience and knowledge, the depository in which lies mingling, though often dormant, all that the eye hath once seen, the ear heard, or the mind conceived. Its extinction were tantamount to the annihilation of consciousness; and all knowledge, all experience of arts and sciences, the laboured acquisitions of ages, would sink into virtual nonentity without a memory to retain them.

Imagination—the power by which, upon the perception of visible objects, we combine them with conceptions of our own, having an analogy or resemblance to them, though in many points opposed to reason, is an auxiliary to it, and often requires the restraints it imposes to sober it down to the naked realities of time. All the emanations of true genius are but its embodiment or incarnation. In poetry it creates and amplifies; in argument it illustrates, adorns, and enforces truth. When life is considered as a probationary state, full of griefs and cares—those trials of our allegiance and love for our Creator and Governor—then imagination often darkens the

picture, [heightens its sorrows by desponding anticipations, and prepares the way for the entrance of despair. But reverse the picture, and consider life in its brighter aspects ; then it flings a halo over all, elevates our joys and excites our feelings, lives in the pages of the novelist, beams in the creations of the poet, paints even the clouds of life with rainbow hues, and dispenses its effervescent charms over all the shaded realities of things that are.

Reason—may be considered an act of the whole mind, or that union of all the mental powers by the exercise of which we judge of any action or event, as related to other actions or events, or in its bearings upon society. It comprehends perception, memory, and imagination. In searching into any unknown or ambiguous subject, or in discussing any argument whatever, we must investigate and compare before we can reason well on the evidence illustrating it, and then reason upon the whole as clearly unravelled from its ambiguities ere we can rightly and faithfully judge. The animal appetites, according to their various degrees and nature, may, to a certain extent, be gratified without any exertion of the reasoning powers. But in such instances our reason only lies dormant, and capable of momentary activity when aroused to exertion ;—take it away, and man sinks into a machine lower than the brutes beneath him. Sense, distinguished as a relative union of the effects produced upon the five inlets which communicate with the brain the knowledge of phenomena without, is not reason, nor intellect, but acts upon the seat of the mind, or the mind itself, though the appropriate organs for conveying the

material impressions from without, and producing, or rather awakening within the mind those trains of thought which seem, indeed, as if springing alone from organisation, to rise up spontaneously within it. Thus the senses are only the organs or inlets by which the mind becomes acquainted with the existence and properties of matter; and reason that union of the faculties by which a continuous train of thought or argument is sustained in its course. The rational existence of man, therefore, is wholly incompatible with the want of reason; and the existence of reason is incompatible with the extinction of the senses. Reason, therefore, in every respect, implies the active existence of the senses, as sense precedes reason, and reason faith.

We have thus glanced at a few of the intellectual faculties of the mind; and, as we are averse to the frigid philosophy of Hobbes, who, in his view of human nature, would divest the human heart of every spark of feeling, and merely represent man as a thinking machine, we shall now take a rapid survey of some of the principal emotions or feelings, requiring only a very subordinate exercise of the intellectual powers singly, though requiring the aid of the whole in combination.

Love—that attraction of hearts between the sexes by a sacred, mysterious, and indissoluble tie, is an inherent instinct as old as creation itself, when it shone as reflected from Deity, in the first progenitors of the human race, and tends directly to the happiness of society—to the union, in bonds the closest, of mutual interests and mutual hopes, and the perpetuation of the species, both of man the intelligent, and all the merely sentient beings in existence. *Affection*

is a modification of love, and tends more directly to the preservation than the perpetuation of the species. The parent loves the child, and the child the parent; and, though the affinity between them be the closest and most inalienable, it is a love more gentle and confiding, because the object of it, on the one side, is unable to assist itself, and the heart of the parent, on the other—through that very weakness—is drawn towards it with closer and increasing tenderness. It possesses none of the warmth and fervour of sexual love, but is more constant and unchanging, the preservation of the child, and hence of the species, who are an aggregate of such, being its designed aim. Affliction cannot quench it, for then the mother's affections expand with the increasing anxiety and watchfulness; disgrace cannot quench it, for then, though the wanderer be turned adrift and be houseless and wretched as the famished prodigal, and the censorious world be cruel in its judgments, and the shafts of persecuting malice fly thick and fast around him, that mother's heart is still open, though bleeding, to receive him, and her arms to encircle him and shield him from the scorn, contempt, and cruelty of his brother man.

We do not love simply because at some time we may feel such an inclination to fasten our affections upon some object which, to us, may seem capable of increasing our happiness and gratifying our passions; when love seizes upon the soul, it absorbs it, and we can as soon cease to live by an act of volition as cease to love when thus wrapt up in its desires. Springing up spontaneously in every bosom, unless

all had some object to love, to become the centre of their affections, ever streaming forth, we should wither and decay. In no other passion do we seem to be so much under the spell of a controlling destiny, because in none other does the inward spring and spirit form such a bond or cement for holding together the elements of society. As the Deity, seen through Creation, is himself the incarnation of love, so he binds mankind harmoniously together by the central and never-failing attraction of the heart.

Hope—whose seeds are implanted in every bosom, and spring up with the rise and growth of the mind into vivid and vital existence, throws around the objects of life a beauty, a richness, and a value—the more enchanting because seen through the medium of a distance, so that the outlines of figures are merely seen, and distinctions and details, observable upon a nearer approach, are lost in the prospective view. It is a mental prospect—an internal telescope—through the magnifying lenses of which the real views and expectations of things are often exaggerated and painted in colours too gorgeous for the naked truth. Imagination differs from hope thus;—imagination often travels into the regions of improbability—hope keeps its wings within the limits of that boundary, as it were insane to hope for what we know it is impossible for us to obtain. Still imagination aids and enlivens hope, and, though it be often baffled and blasted, it is seldom paralysed, and still more seldom extinguished. Despair benumbs and freezes—hope expands and enlivens,—it delights, animates, and pushes forward the young in their

prospects of life, and ministers consolation to the old in the prospect of death. It animates the man of business in the pursuit of wealth, the man of learning in the pursuit of fame, the minister of the cross in enlarging its boundaries and increasing the number of its disciples, and the philanthropist, in his travels of humanity, his "circumnavigation of charity." It invigorates the shipwrecked mariner as he clings to his plank, and inspires the captive with the view of deliverance, and, in all the dangers and vicissitudes environing life, holds out the prospect of smiling success, even though the obstacles be all but insurmountable. From the beginning of time its beams have been shed in every mind, and the end of time shall not witness its annihilation.

"Eternal hope! when yonder spheres sublime
 Peal'd their first notes to sound the march of time;
 Thy joyous youth began, but not to fade—
 When all the sister planets are decayed;
 When wrapt in flames the realms of ether glow,
 And heaven's last thunder shakes the world below.
 Thou undismay'd shalt o'er the ruins smile,
 And light thy torch at nature's funeral pile!"*

Anger—that emotion we feel when the subject of moral or legal injustice, or of any personal assault or disappointment, seems to be a moral weapon designed for the repulsion of sudden violence and aggression, which, though often slumbering, is ever awake when needed, and when artificial weapons were impotent, to cast the gauntlet of defiance against the aggressor, is momentarily aroused to act on the defensive, and

* Conclusion of the Pleasures of Hope.

that with a power for accomplishing what other weapons would fail to perform ; as it not only, when well directed, gives force and efficiency to other weapons, but itself is a preventive against their use by the formidable and threatening attitude it assumes. The glare of the eye, when anger is working within, often excites more fear, and commands a readier submission and deference, than the violent menace of physical force. We fear to awaken the anger of that bosom when its fury would be turned against ourselves, though we may otherwise have no fear of the personal infliction which might follow. The moral overpowers us more than the physical. And the very feeling of anger, when burning within our own bosoms, we feel to be accompanied with a pain which jars with all our moral appetences, and in well regulated minds should lead to a better command of temper and the suppression of violent feeling. In the household, the market, and on the street, and among every combination of men in every community, the very dread of the angry frown—the recoiling dislike with which all shrink from the awakened wrath of their fellow-men, which may follow the various insults and provocations assailing them—is often a check against the outbreakings of raillery, of satire, and violence, with which each would be attacking his neighbour; and when attacked serves as a counteracting force for repelling further aggression ; thus constituting a moral barrier against that civil or social warfare which might otherwise be waged in society. Its design, therefore, though often unnecessarily excited, and suddenly tumultuating without any moral perception of its wrong-

ness, has a reference to the reciprocal happiness, the deference, and apparent good feeling flowing between the members of every social community.

But the existence of intuitive moral perceptions, and a sense of justice, is not in all cases requisite for kindling this emotion. Infants are susceptible of it when any of their little plans are thwarted, and stand in awe of the frowns of awakened wrath—aware of their significancy and import in a degree nothing inferior to those of maturer minds. And in the animal world the yells of exasperated rage are heard in every forest. There is no sense of justice or of injustice awakening the expression of that bitter wrath. The mere sense of physical annoyance and pain arouses the glare of sudden resentment and the outcries of hostile defiance. And this anger so easily aroused in the animal world seems designed, as in man, to resist, in conjunction with their natural weapons, the sudden violence and aggressive attacks made upon them by other animals instinctively aiming at their destruction.

Indignation, to us, seems more a modification of anger than the feeling of anger itself. We are angry at any violence or injustice offered to ourselves; we are morally indignant at the wrongs or oppressions wreaked upon any individual or class of men, in any community or nation. The case of slavery is a peculiar instance of this. The aroused nation hurled not its bolts against any individual upholder of this system, but against the system itself; and the moral force displayed in the indignant remonstrances of a combined people proved at last omnipotent; hurled down the blood and tear-

besmeared Moloch of oppression, and proclaimed to all quarters of the globe that man can never justly hold property in his fellow-man of any nation, colour, or creed. And thus the selfish philosophy received a disclaimer; and its advocates saw and learnt that the love of self is not the sole ruling motive of human action, nor the only basis of individual or social happiness.

Hatred—that feeling of aversion we entertain against any object exciting our disgust, is the antagonist of love, and, in many cases, co-existent with fear. There are many objects awaking our fears, which do not awake the emotion of hatred; and many objects awaking the feeling of hatred which we do not fear. But both seem designed to assist instinctively in the preservation of life and character. Considered with reference to the moral affections, the word hatred, or rather the signification implied by the term, applies with more force than to any of the objects of external nature; as in the natural world, with which we hold constant communion, no objects exist exciting this abhorrent emotion, but its opposite. The thunder and the storm-lashed ocean may awaken our fears and ruffle our complacency when within reach of the bolt or the wave, but our hatred can never be excited against the sublimity of either. And in the irrational creation, our hatred is seldom excited against any of the species, though fear holds us from intimate intercourse with them. But when we look into the shaded arcana of the moral world, and catch a glimpse of the corroding passions gnawing in the human heart—the extremity of vice and pollution

blighting virtue, and crushing it abandoned in the dust, and the selfish though often secret warfare which man wages against his fellow-man—then the hatred of every virtuous bosom is aroused ; and the very recoil with which it turns from the abyss of moral degradation marks, in indelible colours, the infinite chasm between the regions of sunken vice and elevated virtue. Hatred, therefore, though in part an instinctive preservative of life, inasmuch as, when coupled with fear, it withholds us from entering the wilds of savage life, or scenes of physical danger, is more a preservative from the abyss of moral guilt and pollution, by the lessons taught and the disgust inspired by every scene of profligate wretchedness and licentious degradation.

Fear, though imputed by many in most cases to a feeling of cowardice, is, in fact, adapted for the exigences of life in as high a degree as true courage, and both dwell instinctively in the same bosom. Often, indeed, does it prey like a corroding disease upon the soul, creating innumerable evils which otherwise do not exist, flying from every incubus which it conjures up, and betraying a trembling weakness of reason and judgment unfitted for the stern realities of life. We fear when the balance of probability is opposed to the realisation of our hopes ; we fear for our ultimate success in life, or the success of some particular enterprise, and form plans to buttress up our hopes, and turn the calculation of chances in our favour. It is fear, in truth, which is the impelling cause of much of our social prudence and care, which produces an anxiety regarding health and character, life and death. The love of life and fear of death, for in-

stance, impels us to shun the attack of the murderer and the ravenous jaws of the lion, when our lives might fall a sacrifice to the villany of the one, and the natural ferocity of the other.

Pity for the distresses of others, when in our power, holds out the helping hand and administers relief. And even when no real assistance is given, the bare knowledge of having drawn forth the sympathies of other bosoms produces a soothing influence over the irritated feelings of the recipient. Much of the sweetening intercourse uniting heart to heart flows from this sympathetic emotion; and the chaos of deadened intellects and icy emotions, reigning in, and casting a chilly hue over, society, were this feeling extinguished, would, negatively, prove the extent of the benefits it showers upon all. It is from the scope for sympathy which distress affords, springing from whatever cause, that Rochefoucault has drawn the maxim, that "there is always something not unpleasing to us in the distresses of our best friends." The truth of this some may be able to prove.

Of the exulting rise and swelling of the heart, termed *Joy*—an emotion, in general, so transient, so trivial, and superficial in its occasional meteor-like play upon the clouds of life, there are few, even among the most depressed, but who have had some experience. Like heat in the natural world, it expands and cheers by its playful emanations, enlivens the countenance, and casts a genial glow and a hilarity over all surrounding it. And *Sorrow*, its twin brother, or counterpart, is seldom far distant. But how distinct the opposing characters of each! If the effects of joy upon the heart be like the effects of heat and light in the natural world,

sorrow may as emphatically be said to resemble cold and darkness. Everything around it seems contracted and gloomy. The flowers of hope are blighted and wither, the cheerfulness of the countenance has vanished, and a solemnity, at times giving utterance to mournful sounds, is superinduced. And if a mild and seemingly placid calmness be forced outwardly to sit, like marble, silent upon the forehead, mocking, or at least hiding, the depth of the misery or the wound within, it does not argue the existence of an inward stoicism, but only the triumph of a higher patience and a greater mind, which can silently absorb its own griefs, and hide from the world its vain and effeminate ostentation—too often the mere emblem without the reality of the emotion. Other emotions are more active in producing effects for the good or evil of individuals and of society; these are more passive, and in most instances are the exponents of the results which the others bring forth. Hatred calls forth defiance and aversion; love often produces reciprocal love in other bosoms, and, under various circumstances, often is the innocent cause or spring of wars and animosities in families and among kindred for generations; but joy, which generally ends in self, or, in a more contracted sphere, is seldom the parent of other emotions, though followed by them, as of envy, for instance, at the success or good fortune which causes the joy. Sorrow, on the other hand, draws forth sympathy. That tears should have a stronger attraction than smiles—a great man's funeral than a great man's bridal—may seem strange; but such is the law of nature, or the propensity of our dispositions: and thus the heart-

breaking but sublime lamentation of David after the death of Absalom, causes myriads of sensitive hearts to vibrate with similar emotions, while the joyous strain of Miriam elicits but few sparks of kindred feeling whatever.

Thus, then, we perceive the intellectual states and faculties of the mind, as adapted to the system of the world; and the emotions of the heart, as adapted to the moral intercourse between mankind in society and the increase of the world's happiness, to be replete with skilful and benevolent design. But look to the mind in its united strength, when, with all its faculties and energies entire, and aided by the well-tempered zeal of a determined philanthropy, pursuing some great and noble object affecting the knowledge or the moral and physical condition of man, and, hence, the happiness and interest of the world—it bends itself to the arduous task, receding from no apparent difficulty, repelling every adverse blow, until, like Columbus crossing the world of waters, and “piercing the night of ages,” it triumphs the more in its acquisitions and its success from the very greatness of the obstacles opposing its advance, and glories in the mental light and the benefits it has bequeathed to an applauding world—and then contemplate its vastness, and its heaven-aspiring ambition. Behold it exemplified in Newton, as he shuffled off the coils of mortality for a season, and swept the abyss of starry space, demonstrating to the inferior minds of the wondering world the laws which hold the spheres in their unshaken order—in Milton, when, as if inspired, he waved his unwearied wing over the seething abyss of primæval chaos,

scaled the ascent of heaven, and sounded the depths of hell—in the stern reasonings, and wisdom of Socrates, when, by example as by precept, he taught the way to happiness through the avenues of virtue—in the thunders of the orator, of a Demosthenes and an Eschines, or of a Cicero denouncing the treacheries of Catiline—or as exhibited in modern times, when irresistible torrents of eloquence rolled from the lips of a Burke and a Chatham, the one blasting the oppressor of the Indies by the successive flashes of his scorching eloquence, the other hurling his bolts to overthrow the fabric which impolitic cruelty and injustice were rearing, to fix a lasting stain upon the escutcheon of our country.

A union of minds creates a union of interests, and a union of interests a community, and the strength and prosperity of that community the moral and intellectual enlightenment of its members. In no nation which has attained any height and influence in the balance of power, as compared with other dynasties, can the history of a single century be recorded, during which the names of distinguished individuals, who have revolutionised sentiments and systems of opinion, and impressed their genius upon the affairs and institutions of their country, have not been placed in the niche of immortality. It is oftener, indeed, by the daring boldness of isolated individuals that revolutions, whether for the benefit or the bane of nations, are brought about, than by the concentrated movements of an army or a people; but the patient progress of industry, the gradual accumulation and rise of

a nation's wealth and power, in commerce and manufacture, can only be obtained by a union of interests, and a well compacted organization of all the elements necessary for its consolidation. As proved amongst ourselves, it is amazing what the exertions of the united minds of a whole nation can bring to pass, in arts and sciences, in wealth and influence spread over colonies and hemispheres, and swaying the deliberations of foreign cabinets and kings. But in this small isle of the ocean, blest though we be with liberty and peace, and their sure followers, intelligence and happiness, in a greater degree than other nations can boast, it were impossible for us to have reared the colossal superstructure of wealth and extended possession, had not the avenues of the intellectual world been opened wide, and, despite the taxes on knowledge, admitted light through every branch of science: A free press, unfettered by any avowed censorship as in despotic countries, freedom of combination, a full and open expression of all opinions within the limits of legitimate controversy, short of open actual treason and irrational blasphemy, boundless scope for invention and intercourse, with the world for a market, and its inhabitants for purchasers,—have raised us to an unexampled height among the nations; but as we must rise higher still, and pluck yet nobler laurels from the expanding branches of the tree of knowledge, the army of tax-gatherers surrounding it with privileged barriers must be abolished. Expansion is the law of mind; but chain it by laws and interdicts—tax its aliment,

as was taxed the bread for the body—and you practically limit that expansion unlimited by God—you gauge the dimensions of that mind which God alone can measure, and literally starve and stunt the intellect, by partially suppressing the knowledge which is its only food.

GEOLOGY. AND ATHEISM.

A CONSIDERATION of ascertained facts, logical and historical, as well as experimental, leads to the conclusion that the present backwardness in knowledge, in science, and in civilization and refinement, is in a great measure attributable to the few years of man's existence upon earth. And the geological observations which go so far to establish this view of the history of our species, is strictly experimental, and based upon phenomena evidencing the fact of creative power being exerted at an era, or successive eras, of the world's history anterior to the present; and lastly, manifesting itself in raising the present state of things from the chaos consequent upon some destructive revolution at a more remote epoch of its existence.

And, perhaps, there have been few subjects about which, at one period, more strife has been generated, and more open controversial war waged, with equal firmness and uncompromising determination by the parties on both sides of the question, than Geology, considered with regard to the views it generates of the age and past history of the globe.

The immensity of the scope allowed on all sides of the question for debate and speculation, and the great importance involved within it, though not necessarily involving any of the essential doctrines of

Revelation, tended, while awakening reason, to arouse prejudice, declamatory intolerance and error, by spreading the fallacious supposition that an attempt was being made to undermine the strongholds of the Truth, and overturn, with one blow, the whole Mosaic account of the Creation. But while these suppositions were entertained by many good and pious men, another shout, but of an opposite nature, was raised from a different quarter. The champions of infidelity, though probably seeing the non-discrepancy between the data evolved by geologists and the records of Moses, seized the opportunity so unintentionally thrown before them, and attempted by the facts brought to light to consolidate the baseless superstructure of that wretched Atheism which blasts, and withers, and destroys. Thus it is that the most jealous and unflinching friends of a system are often its worst enemies.

It is the theory, or rather the demonstrated fact, of the indefinite antiquity of the matter of the present globe, and a succession of arrangements differing from and antecedent to the present, upon which the whole controversy has been based, inasmuch as the anti-geologists charge the advocates of the science with a direct violation, on the side of scepticism, of the Mosaic account of the six days' work of Creation. This alarm upon the question has, however, been wholly unsustained by facts, as the argument, when conducted in a proper spirit, has been ably shown to leave the whole history untouched and entire; and at the same time to show, with the utmost consistency, that the principal conclusions drawn from the laborious investigations of geologists

neither clash with each other, nor with the sacred history of our world.

We have, in the commencement of the Mosaic history, what is generally termed an account of the Creation ; but the arrangement of this orderly world out of the previously commingling chaos cannot properly be said to have been begun until the latter clause of the second verse, where it is said "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now, anterior to the commencement of this creation of material order, and beauty, and organic existence, we are plainly told that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." And it seems to be that the first, and the first half of the second verse, above quoted, does not convey the meaning that the abstract matter of the world was first ushered into existence at the same period assigned by Moses for the commencement of the first day's operations ; but that God, at some period remote and unascertainable, was, out of nothing, the original Creator of the plastic matter, which at the time his narrative begins, was in a state of chaos, and out of which He framed the magnificent superstructure of the present globe. In this interpretation of the Scripture narrative there is no inconsistency. The creation of matter had a beginning ; but since it was first called into being it has been the theatre of many physical revolutions, and we may, instead of limiting its bare existence to the short space of six thousand years, without unduly outraging probabilities, consider it to have existed for millions of years, or to rise to such incalculable

sums as to baffle arithmetic and the comprehension of man. This view of the subject may, with all justice, be entertained; for while it leaves entire the records of Moses, it gives unbounded scope for the investigations of geology.

Here, however, the advocates of Atheism came forth, and thought, or pretended to think, that they drew additional strength to support their argument of matter's eternity, from the facts brought to light by the elaborate investigations of this science. They stated boldly and with open declamation their adoption of geological data as tending to abet their cause, and thus gave an additional inducement for the fierce hostility of the opponents of the new geological doctrines. But it is evident though we allow an indefinite series of revolutions with succeeding arrangements of the globe may, and evidently have occurred, even so numerous as to baffle human calculation,—that by going backwards millions of millions of years in search of the remotest economies, we do not advance the one-millionth part of a second towards a commencement of that eternity which never had a beginning. It lies like a perfect but incomprehensible circle before us, arched over by the bridge of time, the one end of which disappears as the other rises from the ocean behind. The points, if we may use the term, of infinity and eternity so meet together without beginning or end of duration. Could it, indeed, be supposed that the infinitude of past ages had a beginning, then could it also be supposed—and without any infraction upon the rules of sound reasoning, or without sinking, Spinoza-like, into the depths of a universal Pantheism—that the universe

itself was God, and that the creed of Atheism best harmonized with the appearance of established facts ; as a beginning of 'past eternity involves a commencement of the existence of God,—a doctrine which would destroy his attributes and annihilate his existence, because being in that case self-created, he would be a contradiction to himself—a being anterior to and creating all things, and yet the creator of himself. Of the gross absurdity of such a mode of reasoning the Atheist himself must be perfectly conscious. And if he still continues to hold the tenet that the world has had no commencement, no fountain-head from whence it first emerged, his reasoning from geological facts for an eternity of matter, and an eternal series of organic and vegetable existences, draws him within the network of an argument from which he cannot escape.

By the constant operation of the natural laws the present order or economy of the globe is undergoing great change. The earth, with its diversified scenes of hills and vales, of woods and streams, is all tending to a level. The now existing ocean, unless conservative influences be exerted to preserve its equilibrium, will rush over the present land, and involve the whole in one sweeping and destructive inundation, without the possibility of escape for any of the engulfed inhabitants ; and the agencies at work, and capable of producing such a terrific revolution, without the intervention of miraculous power, are perfectly natural. While the matter of the dry land is not in a state of permanency, but is incessantly carried downwards into rivers and seas, the sediment thus deposited in the chambers

of the deep must, in combination with the remains of the animal inhabitants, be filling up the channels of the ocean, and, undergoing a hardening process by the pressure of the superincumbent waters, be converted into a solid texture of layers or strata, with shells and animals embedded in them, which when exhibited to the wondering eyes of far distant generations, or of another economy of the globe, will shew as infallibly the nature of a portion of the animals of the present world and of man, as do the remains of those now found in the strata proclaim their own nature in a former economy or economies far distant. And it is discernible, as a consequence of this filling up of the sea, that the sea itself is making a corresponding encroachment upon the dry land. What in many places is now good soil for the husbandman, will be covered with waters,—the common depository or receptacle for the remains of marine, in conjunction with land animals, and of man. Myriads of land animals, deposited at the mouths of rivers and swept into the sea, and the once living, intelligent cargoes of men destroyed with their shipwrecked navies and fleets, mingle with the shark and the whale in the various strata now in process of formation in the depths below. And should another revolution occur, the present continents be depressed, and the bottom of the sea be heaved up to form new continents, and a race of beings like man inhabit them, he will thus find imbedded in the latest formations the remains of beings, of a species or genera similar to his own, to draw forth, in common with other animal remains, his speculative wonder and learned research.

This, as palpable evidence attests, has already taken place, and may again occur long previous to the period when the land may be supposed to become level with the sea. But whatever may have been the immediate cause of producing former physical catastrophes upon the surface of the earth, there are conceivable agencies at work perfectly adequate for again producing a revolution as destructive in its effects as any of the preceding. The volcanic action of subaqueous fires, heaving up the channels of the sea into mountainous elevation, would instantly precipitate the waters over the dry continents of the present world, and by the sudden violence break up and disunite the stratified rocks of the newly-emerged land. This may have actually been the case in the present economy of our earth, to which, it is supposed, the loose shingle and *debris* found among the solid strata bears a strong testimony. And in conjunction with this, or even independent of it, there are other causes sufficient in themselves to produce a great physical change upon the earth, to the entire destruction of its teeming population. The change of a few degrees in the axis of revolution would heave the waters of the sea over the land; or was the axis of revolution to be suddenly transferred to the equator, it is certain, by the flattening of the earth at the poles, that the waters of the ocean would be precipitated thither;—nor would the terrific convulsions immediately succeeding it cease until, by the bulging of the earth at the present poles, a new equator, elevated like the present, and

further from the centre of the earth by so many miles, was again formed.

But whatever causes may appear assignable for the production of such stupendous effects, according to all geological evidences it is clear that many such revolutions have taken place upon the surface of the earth, the marks of each successive catastrophe being traceable through the distinctive characters impressed upon each, the last formation being that preceding the last revolution, and now forming the crust of the present order of the globe. And in conjunction with each successive formation it is clearly ascertained that there is a change, not only of the species of the animals imbedded, but even of the genera; that the further observation is extended upward among the older formations, the resemblance between the animals forming the population of each economy becomes more dissimilar to those of the present world than those of the last formations, and that some of the latter bear so close a resemblance to those now populating the earth, that the ablest anatomists can scarcely distinguish between them. And here one remarkable fact, of peculiar force in our argument, stands prominently forward:—In none of the strata yet open to observation have the remains, nay, nor the vestige, of a human skeleton been found, to lead to the supposition that man existed in any former condition of the earth; which fact of itself is a strong argument in favour of the recent origin of the human race.

In reasoning from all these appearances, which lead us to infer the operation of some great power,

if not immediately concerned in miraculously producing each destructive catastrophe, at least, as immediately concerned in peopling the desolate wastes of each successive arrangement of things, with races of beings peculiarly adapted to the nature of each system, there appears, as far as human knowledge and ingenuity can perceive, no other mode of producing animal and vegetable existences, than through the common established line of preceding animals and vegetables of the like species. The atheists of a former age, and some of their successors in this, boldly advocated the doctrine of spontaneous or equivocal generation, and of man's progressive development, stage by stage, from an oyster or a frog, to his present noble organization and god-like supremacy of reason;* and one of the greatest and boldest abettors of that dark system—Voltaire—in the train of his reasoning, or rather sneering declamation, brings forward, with great apparent satisfaction to himself, the wretched instance of the mixture of flour and water, which mixture, when fermented, and examined with microscopical minuteness, will, it is affirmed, be found inhabited by organized beings; from which instance, though wholly destitute of proof, they conceive there is no apparent inconsistency in believing that the first links of the whole chain of animal being have been originally so produced.

In arguing, however, from such obscure and insufficient premises, the thing is taken for granted which is incapable of proof. Though we, perhaps,

* See "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation."

cannot perceive the original rudiments, or eggs, or sperm, or any requisite kind of seed whatever, from which these animalcule spring into being, it cannot follow that it does not exist previous to the incubation or birth, in whatever way, of the insect or animal. Their minuteness, even when examined by the microscope, prevents us from becoming acquainted with their mode of propagation, and, indeed, our knowledge of their simple existence is solely derived from their motion. But even though in the cases of the infusoria which abound in all water, in stagnant pools and marshes, be obscure and indeterminate, no appearance in nature can favour the supposition that any animal or vegetable known as existing individuals of any living species, have been, or can be brought into being, otherwise than through the common line of transmission from parent animals and seeds. And reasoning from analogy, as the atheist does, but with proofs which he wants, from things which we know to things of which our knowledge is very limited, we have no reason to suspect the invariableness of nature in the generation of organic beings or vegetable productions, because we may be ignorant how the almost invisible beings of this teeming world alternately propagate and die. So long, therefore, as, in the departments of nature open to our view, no agency apart from that by which we perceive animals and vegetables to spring from others of the same species, can be brought forward as affecting the generation of any organic being whatever, we have every reason to think that the millions of creatures existing in every drop of water, in fermented or putrified substances,

or wherever found, so run the successive alternations of birth, and life, and death.

If, in the great laboratory of nature, those powers were at work which, by their combined agency, could generate minute organic beings, and impart vitality to the complex mechanical functions, the same power would certainly be adequate for the production of animals on a larger scale. That principle in nature capable of producing an animalculæ, could, with a greater degree of mechanical power, produce a man. But no such principles having the smallest approximation to it, apart from those in operation, have ever been found to exist. All the prime agents continually at work in the material world, whether considered singly or in combination—the electric, the magnetic, the chemical, and the mechanical—have never been known to indicate the smallest tendency towards such a formation. What naturalist or chemist, in the midst of his analyzation of compound matter, has brought to light, or wrung from the tortured bosom of Nature, any of those secrets by which either animal or vegetable life can spontaneously be generated. On the contrary, the experience of all ages, and the testimonies of all men, directly refute the supposition, as the production of organic life where life was not, without an intelligent cause, is simply self-creation. And so also of vegetable existence; for though the mechanism of animal bodies be more elaborate and complex than that of plants, yet the obvious design, alike in the blade of grass, the flower, and the tree, leads to the same inference as does the symmetrical frame of man in its erect living majesty and beauty.

It will appear evident that the whole drift of the Atheistic argument is to avoid the admission of intelligent design, by substituting the phantom Chance, an eternity of matter, and an eternal series of organic beings. We certainly hold the opinion entertained by heathen sages, that, apart from Revelation, it is impossible to prove the non-eternity of abstract matter. The ingenious *à priori* arguments of Dr. Clarke, brought forth to prove this position, though in some parts strongly plausible, are destitute of positive proof. We could not reason, from seeing a piece of inorganic matter, or a lump of unshapen marble, that they bore the marks of a sculptor's hand; and no more could we have reasoned, from the mere light of nature, that the world of brute matter lying in a plastic and yielding chaos before us, bore the impress of the creative interference of an antecedent mind. But though we cannot trace the fiat of Creation in the simple substratum of matter, it still undoubtedly follows that wherever we see the proofs of contrivance, we infer a contriver. To tell us of the actual creation of matter, the medium of Revelation was necessary, though to tell us of a mighty architect being employed in planning and executing the arrangement of its commingling elements into order, and beauty, and organic life, a glance across the fields of Nature's wonders is sufficient. We see, and are convinced, that order, uncaused, could not arise out of confusion—that death could not evolve life.

Here, again, the Atheist assumes the inherent powers and self-creative energies of matter. But if eternal, these powers and energies must have existed

and been operating from all eternity in the production of the endless line of ancestors of the present race of beings, animal and vegetable. And if motion, as he affirms be the distinguishing power in operation for creating and sustaining all, it must likewise have been eternally co-existent with matter, and acted in joint operation with it, as it could not have begun at any later period to act without intelligence to communicate the impulse; and it could not, in conjunction with matter, have possessed those energies eternally without eternally operating. And at this point it incontrovertibly follows, that this hypothesis, and the one which advocates an eternal series, merge into one, as there can be no difference, except in mere terms, between an eternal series of organized beings, and an eternal, uncreated universe, containing within itself the powers and properties of self-creation and independent existence. But here we presume the axiom—that by nothing nothing can be made—is peculiarly applicable, as motion, not being an inherent property of matter, could not produce itself, and therefore cannot have had infinite existence, or been operating from all eternity. And if motion, therefore, be not inherent in matter, matter could not communicate to itself the original projection which set the celestial worlds wheeling round the sun, and the terrestrial machinery of our earth in harmonious operation. Here, then, is an infinite discrepancy.

But should auxiliary evidences be admitted in such an argument, we might show that the recent origin of the present economy of the globe and of man is fully corroborated by the traditions handed

downward, by historians and poets, from almost every nation of the world. And it is strange, if false, how many traditional accounts of one object, proceeding downwards from times so far remote, and from nations so far distant from each other—from Greeks and Indians, from Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Jews—should, when brought together and strictly compared, and found free from fraud and collusion, speak with one voice, and give the same direct testimony to one great and marvellous event. How is it, then, we may ask, if an eternal series of beings has been extended backwards through infinite ages, that the historical traditions of nations are so limited in time, or that so many parts of the globe are still unpeopled? How is it that the perfectibility of the human race is so far distant?—that human knowledge is so limited and imperfect, and our moral, mental, and natural sciences are in a state of such incipency? Or how is it that man, if of an eternal series, is so limited in respect of himself, and found in many regions ignorant and barbarous? *

It has been alleged by those on the opposite side of the argument, when advocating an eternal series, and unable to shirk the discussion consequent upon the clear results of geological discoveries, that at every successive physical revolution of the globe the great majority of men and animals perished; but that a few fortunate individuals saved from the general wreck would be perfectly sufficient to propagate their species, and keep up a regular transmission of the whole order of men and animals through infinite ages, even until now. And leaning to this side of the argument, one of the ablest advocates of

Atheism in its most philosophic form—Laplace, in his "System of the World,"*—supposes that a collision between this earth and a comet would produce such effects upon its surface, the proofs of which we see so deeply engraven ; and assumes that at such a crisis the few inhabitants then existing, reduced, amidst the wreck of elements, to the most deplorable destitution, would lose all remembrance of their former civilization and refinement, and lapse backward to a state of primæval ignorance and darkness.

In holding this position, however, with regard to the last or any preceding economy or revolution, the philosopher reasons without the shadow of a proof, and so argues without reason. There is as little reason for supposing man to have been the inhabitant of a former economy, as there is for supposing him to have been generated by chance. The proofs for the recent creation of other animals are not less decisive than for the recent creation of man, as the animals of the present world seem to be races altogether distinct from those peopling the surface of a former economy. Though they approximate in kind, yet the line drawn between them is shown by comparative anatomy to be perfectly clear. And were it even probable that a few animals of different species survived the destruction of a former economy, and which, by mingling promiscuously together, produced animals of a nature distinct from either of their progenitors, there is no possibility of transmitting the line of these neutral transformations so as to form a distinct and enduring race. The

* See Pond's Translation.

transmutation ceases, as in the case of the mule, with the individual offspring; so that, if even a few stragglers of different species of animals had survived the shocks of such catastrophes as this planet appears to have undergone, the metamorphosed offspring of any two individuals of different species could extend the race no further.

And when so many fossil skeletons of various animals are found imbedded in the different strata, and no human remains have been, or can be discovered, how is it possible that man can find the clue to trace back his origin to infinity, or even to a former economy of the world?—can suppose himself the descendant of a few miserable individuals surviving the wreck of each revolution, who upon the loss of all former refinement, lapsed into a state of antediluvian ignorance and barbarism? How is it that among the animal remains found no human frame has been discovered; and that no appearance whatever has been observed indicating, though but faintly, the existence of a preceding refinement of human agency and power in any arrangement? Surely if this hypothesis were correct, traces of both man's former existence and civilization in a former condition of the earth would be obvious and easily discovered. But no such discoveries have yet been made, and hence the principal links in the chain of evidence for substantiating this doctrine of an eternal series through geological phenomena cannot be produced. The origin of man, therefore, with all classes of animals, cannot be far distant, and they must have had an intelligent Creator adequate in every respect for their production. What,

then, can be this mighty cause? Who or what out of the inanimate corpuscles of pre-existent matter formed the animal frame of man, and imparted life and intelligence, reason and reflection, to the complicated mechanism, to proclaim its divinity and demonstrate its wonder-working power?

We have seen that a time was when man and his fellow-creatures were not; that the wildest dreams of the most extravagant fanciers would never seriously attribute his being to chance; that his existence as a contingent and dependent being from all eternity is impossible; and that no spontaneous generation—no plastic powers inherent in inanimate matter—have been adequate for the production of a blade of grass or an insect, and, hence, inadequate for the production of man. Among all these schemes of creation there shines a manifest absurdity, which shocks reason, baffles sense, and confounds the intellect of man. None of them, in all their labouring struggles after probability, can account for the first link of the great chain of being which still lengthens in its progress. And when all these hypotheses are at fault—are inconsistent with established facts and principles, what, we may again ask, from the chambers of a previous nonentity, created that exquisite frame of man, and all that God-like reason and intelligence which now spiritualizes the earth? What, after the commingling rush and the chaos of elements consequent upon, or rather coeval with, the heaving of old ocean from his resting-place and sinking into new channels, could, out of the confu-

sion, create that order and harmony now adorning the outer crust of the globe, and re-people its wastes with creatures adapted to its various elements and states of being. What, may we not reply, but the fiat of the Eternal, uttered from the heavens he inhabits, could create, from previous wreck and ruin and intellectual nonentity, all the order and beauty of this universe, and all that intelligence, which, springing from the inexhaustible treasury of his own eternal mind, stamps a halo, a glory, an importance over all, on the extinction of which the whole material universe were as if lapsed into annihilation ! When, in all our attempts to account for the creation of what bears the impress of a designing hand, we are lost in incomprehensible riddles to which no clear solution can be given, this is the only haven in which we can rest—this is the only legitimate conclusion at which we can arrive—a conclusion important because it is a truth, the foundation and emanating centre of all other truths ; and a conclusion the knowledge of which, as it affects the being of mankind in all conditions and at all times, both the present and the future, is one involving within itself the most important destinies of all the intelligence of the created universe ; a conclusion, the acknowledgment of the truth of which places before man glimpses of a career of glory through immortal ages ; and which, if denied, according to professed Atheistical views, throws around him, even though surrounded with stars, the prison-house of hopeless despair—points to the grave as his eternal bed, where, wrapt in the shrouds of eternal oblivion, no last trump shall break his sleep, no resurrection morn

shall dawn, but the silence and darkness of annihilation shall brood for ever.

Our self-imposed task is, for the present, brought to a close. If the tendency of all true knowledge be to chasten, expand, and elevate the soul, and lead the mind captive in the chain of truth, and along the avenues of science, to a contemplation of nature and nature's God, then geology, which in point of sublimity is placed by Sir John Herschell next to astronomy, has attached to its investigations no common degree of interest. At first sight it may seem a science in no way calculated to yield much remuneration to the intellectual inquirer; and, perhaps, the very nearness and commonness of the objects under review may account for the indifference expressed and entertained. "Things," says Bishop Berkley, "which seldom happen strike; whereas, frequency lessens our admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable." And though we may daily plunge into mines, survey piled-up rocks, and mark the encroachment of seas, and consider how far our manufacturing, and hence our commercial, prosperity has been, and still must be, indebted to the geological conformation of our island, and thus view the science in its utilitarian bearings, we may also, as we have done, consider it in far loftier bearings, and as connected with a far mightier scale of operations.

Yet is the practical view of geology the most interesting to the commercial community; and the town in which we now write owes its great manufacturing prosperity to the rich veins of coal and mineral abounding in the district. Yet how few

smelters of iron think, when filling or emptying their furnaces of the molten ore, of the nature of the strata from which it has been dug! How few miners of coal, when boring through the earth, think that the very fossilized fuel they convey from its subterranean depths was once, incalculable ages ago, as dense forests upon the surface of the earth, fanned by the winds and warmed by the sunshine of Heaven! Yet would they be something elevated in knowledge, and nothing lowered in morals, by a little studious application to so interesting a subject.

The first principles of any art or science must certainly be mastered before we can properly apply the minor details. Yet no art or science can be fully comprehended without some knowledge of the others. Each is auxiliary to all, and all to each. All the branches of natural philosophy hang from one centre, point to one universal truth, and proclaim one and the same God. A beautiful analogy thus runs through all the departments of Creation, and the arts and sciences are but successive clusters of views of the grand material panorama, developing at every stage of discovery new fields of wonder and inexhaustible themes for contemplation for both men and angels. All the higher discoveries of science have, sooner or later, been in some degree made subservient for the practical purposes of common life. The operative miner, ignorant of geology, or the sluggish tradesman unacquainted with history or philosophy, and wedded to sensuality, may not see nor appreciate their direct influence; but as all true discoveries tend to elevate morals and

induce thought by spreading correct knowledge, and as all moral progress and elevation hinge on the side of a more refined humanity, every step taken in advance is felt, it may be indirectly, but most assuredly by all.



ON THE ARISTOCRACY AND
EDUCATION.

WE shall always find that the difference between the Briton and the untutored savage, marks the power and effects of civilization; while the difference between the man and the child merely marks the power of progression. The difference between the savage and his child is nearly as great as that between the European and his offspring. The seeds of human nature, sown in whatever soil, are still the same. Change the position of the two children;—let the child of the white man be brought up, to manhood amidst a barbarous tribe, and where will be the remembrance of his native land, the privileges to which he was born, or the rank his parents held in society? Through the glassy mirror of the lake he may see his white face reflected, and mark the difference, between his skin and those of his darker brethren, but what caused the difference he knows not, and heeds not. He knows of no higher state of being, and his mind is dark and unfruitful within; and sunk thus in the lap of barbarity he passes his days afar from refined and civilized society, and ignorant of that cultivation of mind which the child of the savage enjoys,—and enjoys with powers of

intellect as great and comprehensive, with affections as warm, and with sensibilities as keen, as if he was the child of the monarch of the land.

It is thus that knowledge, whatever soil, or whatever heart it reaches, proves, in defiance of all opposing cavils, that every human mind, whether its possessor be white or coloured, bond or free, savage or civilized, is capable, when properly nurtured, of rising to the highest stages of human refinement. Tell this to him who wields the lash in the accursed plantations of human slavery, and he will indignantly deny the statement. Tell it to the degraded—the tortured negro himself, and he will instantly confirm the fact, not only by his meekness, his forbearance, his christian deportment to his white *christian* master, exulting and feasting upon his wrongs,—but he will tell you with the emphasis of incontrovertible truth, as he told his ill-fated assembly of brethren in Jamaica, when holding up the fragment of a newspaper, that their being rent from their native woods and streams, from all the associations of kindred and country,—that their being scourged, chained, and borne away captives to the islands of the west, there to be brutalized, mangled, and condemned to the toil of the slave, was simply because *the white men had all the knowledge*.

But if, as the negro truly asserted, the white population of the earth possesses the keys of knowledge, may we not ask how its progress has been so slow among ourselves, and its effects so long in being felt and recognised. We turn to the people forming the base of the great social pyramid, and we ask how it is that such deep ignorance still exists so exten-

sively among them? Doubtless the reply from some may be that the people are, in a general sense, to blame, in rejecting and abusing the opportunities for mental cultivation; and, through the natural depravity of the human heart, have become fettered to sensual and intemperate habits, besotted themselves with the meanest vices, and become panderers to the basest passions, thereby defeating in many points all the efforts made to refine and elevate the immortal principle within. But this, though in many cases true, deplorably true, does not give a clear and full solution to the problem. Have the enlightened orders above us, the clergy of the national church, the aristocracy, and the legislators of our country—not by government mandates, and through legislative channels—but personally and by example, ever shewn that affectionate solicitude for promoting the education of the people, which, by the responsible posts they occupy, and the manifold advantages they possess, it is their right and their paramount duty to do?

We answer, No. It is notorious that in all ages and nations, when the usurping tyranny, the headlong ambition of a monarch, or the avarice of his favourites was to be promoted, that the people, blinded by ignorance, enervated by debasing superstition, or awed by tyrannical power, were only made the ministers of their guilt, the sanguinary instruments of their elevation. Thus crushed and blighted, —bent down by intellectual decrepitude, and incapable of clear reason or consecutive thought, their whole ethereal being, capable of rising to the eternal, was wrapt up in the slumbers of an animalism, tanta-

mount to a spiritual annihilation. The principle of their whole existence, as valued by priests and nobles, was the negation of all knowledge and independence. For a vassal to dare to think, and express his opinion, or remonstrate with his feudal master, was but the signal for a dungeon, the racks of the inquisition or death. Look to Rome—the hydra of the moral world, and consider the nature of the laws set forth by its successive Hierarchs, to control and drown in ignorance the minds of its votaries through so many ages, and in a great measure even until now.

Nor was it by force of arms that their prerogative over Europe was exercised to the intellectual debasement and slavery of her millions of souls; a spell more terrible in its effects benumbed the minds of the nations and prostrated their energies, until, like automats in chains, they could look up and shout applause at the mummeries of the priesthood, the cruelties of the inquisition, and the excommunicating thunders of the Vatican, echoing abroad, and charged with the messengers of cruelty, blood and death. What system was even so perfect in itself, the work not of one, but of many ages, for clouding reason and extinguishing spiritual light, while flattering, mocking, deluding, and ruining humanity,—that pontiffs might reign, that cardinals might rule, that priests might revel in sensual styes, and that the blinded people might be kept under the more implicit sway of the crucifix and the cowl? Founded in falsehood and error, and adapted in its many features, and tortuous many-sided policy, to all the weaknesses and corruptions of humanity, the

mighty superstructure has been cemented with blood. The subtle cunning and profound policy of Hildebrand, the fierce cruelty of Dominic, the brutality of the sensual Alexander VI., and the polished and brilliant profligacy of Leo X., *the author of the Reformation* ;* all have conspired to render Romish tyranny more hideous and profound by more deeply enthralling the people in ignorance, and loading their imposing religious ritual with unmeaning masques and ceremonies. But let us be just. Except, as a political engine, the nobles were as ignorant of the truths of Christianity as their vassals ; and the bulk of the priesthood as ignorant as either. The expediency of both was to press down opinion, to stifle enquiry, and keep the intellects of Europe wrapt up in worse than Egyptian darkness.

What, we may ask, caused the fell butcheries of the Waldenses and the Albigenses in their native vales but the determination to stifle free enquiry and make every neck cringe beneath the iron yoke of the papal arm ! Was it the love of knowledge and enquiry, or the desire to suppress it, which aroused the dozing priesthood of Europe to crush the doc-

* This expression may seem strange to some, but it is, we presume, nevertheless true. The mind of Luther, and, to some extent, the minds of Europe were prepared for some great religious crisis ; and Leo X. by the sale of his indulgences, through his brutal agent John Tetzel, led the way, and gave ample scope to Luther and his adherents for the fearless exposure of the corruptions and false doctrines of the Church of Rome. Leo X. and his predecessors laid, indeed, by their villanies and abominations, the train for the Reformation ; Luther applied the spark which ignited it, and ended in the earthquake which dismembered Rome, and shook the continent.

trines of Luther in their triumphant diffusion ! Was it the love of knowledge which caused the starry Galileo to be thrust into a dungeon, whence the heavens upon whose wonders he loved to gaze, could no more be viewed in all their amplitudes ! Was it the love of extending knowledge which, in nations seccalled christian, in modern times, and among ourselves, has edged the sword of persecution and armed the bigot with the shield of intolerance ! Was it the desire to make knowledge universal, and hasten the spiritual renovation of mankind of whatever color, which impelled the planters of the West, and their advocates in our Houses of Parliament, to aim at crushing the attempts of the zealous missionaries of the cross in spreading instruction among the negroes, doomed, by the sable hue of their skin, to clanking fetters and beastly traffic ! Or is it the love of extending true knowledge, which in the present day, impels our *christian* authorities in the east, not only to wink at, but openly to sanction and encourage, under salutes of their guns, the darkened devotees of juggernaut in their devotions, that their golden coffers may be more highly heaped.* If it was, or is, the desire to quench the flame of knowledge in its enlightening career, which has produced, or is producing these enormous evils, then let us add, there have at all times been causes, apart from the natural aversion of the minds of the working classes themselves, conspiring against the progress of knowledge and intellectual freedom over the earth.

But it were well, if to atone for past omissions

* The case when the above was written.

and misdeeds, the legislators of nations, even now, deserved the encomiums we could wish to pay them for endeavouring to promote knowledge and universal toleration, upon the principles of equity, among all sects and parties. Could we be brought to believe that the Ecclesiastical Education Bill of 1843, which Sir James Graham adopted as his child, was only a farce intended to try with what amount of energy the people would condemn and shew an opposing point to tyranny,—then might we think it only a state stratagem devised to shew those behind the curtain, how hopeless were any attempts to impose upon an active and awakened people jealous of their rights and privileges. But we can have no such belief; our hopes are not so sanguine; there are, we are led to believe, many who still view with jealousy and alarm, the progressive rise of the people in knowledge, and who, we fear, was their power equal to their will, would crush the rising republic of mind, and again in some degree, establish the reign of dictatorial tyranny and brute force. They court the homage of ignorance and dread the more discriminating homage of knowledge. They love the darkness and hate the light. But why do they hate it? It almost appears impossible, when aware that all human beings are, at least, rational in their natures, that such can conceive to themselves any legitimate plea for an exclusive right to have that nature and that mind rendered fruitful and intelligent. Through the avenues of knowledge they can compare, select and judge,—and why may not also the working classes train themselves with the resources at

their command, in the habits of thinking, selecting and comparing?

But no; it seems the inexorable fiat has been pronounced that the poor must earn their bread by the sweat of the brow,* and, hence, according to their disqualifying estimate a line is drawn between them, which cannot, without a gross violation of hereditary and constitutional right, be overpassed. But if, as they would unblushingly assert, there be a line of demarcation drawn between those of the aristocracy and the labouring community other than present respected, established rights, let them hold it forth to the astonished public view. There is a line already drawn out, broad, palpable and every way recognized by the laws of the land, and the institutions and population of the country;—the rich have their golden hoards to lure the eye—they have their innumerable acres year after year filling afresh their coffers, and sustaining them in splendour, and the Queen upon the throne cannot force an acre from their lands nor a farthing from their coffers; but if,

* The writer relies upon memory, but thinks it was Earl Fitzwilliam, who brought forward this argument a few years ago in his place in the House of Lords; not however to draw the inference from it which many have drawn—that a broad line should be drawn between those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, and the rich, but the contrary. A clergyman in the south of England is stated by the Rev. B. Parsons, in his work on education, to have said that “education is a bad thing for the working classes.” This worthy left a good town for a country living, because in the latter place the boors paid more deference to the cloth.

in addition to these, they would draw a line between themselves and the people, in the free republic of knowledge, the line of right is neither discerned nor discernable, defined, nor defineable. The same eternal law of nature which proclaims our freedom of body, proclaims our freedom of mind; and he who, while himself possessing its privileges, would debar our approach to the fountains of knowledge, is a dastard and a slave more pitiable, yet more despicable than the most brutalized heathen among the slave gangs in the American plantations.

Again the exclusive educationists return to the attack, and affirm, that to render a state truly happy and prosperous, the legislative body alone need be learned and wise. They can direct the wheels of the state chariot how to roll, while the mass undisturbed by the political movement, may repose in happiness amidst their industry, nor agitate themselves with contemplating causes and effects which they cannot comprehend. But why such apologies? Why cannot the people comprehend them? What prevents the members of our legislature and the branches of our aristocracy from instructing the people, their legitimate supporters, in the science of government as well as in all moral and intellectual freedom? And for whom is a legislature embodied and its functions employed, but for the protection, good government, and welfare of the people composing the community? According to them, however, it is a matter of no moment, if the legislative head be alive and active, whether the members of the lower extremities be possessed of vitality and feeling. It is no matter whether the people can think,—their

duty is only to act, while the exclusive educationists will preclude their thinking for themselves, by shutting up the fountains of thought in ignorance and *thinking for them by proxy*.

Let such, however, consider whether their tenure of office would be more secure, and their power more absolute, by keeping the subjects more ignorant and degraded. If so, their reasoning is at fault; as it appears clear that, if rulers be upright and just, their best, and, in many points, their only safeguard against prejudice, misconstruction, and error, is in the extensive education of the people; as an educated mind will more clearly see and, if good, appreciate the drift and tendency of the State policy than an ignorant mass guided in their uproarious alternations of applause and blame, by the wily cunning of sophists and factious demagogues. Take, however, the most philosophic statesmen of the present day—most deeply versed in political and legislative wisdom—and mark whether they would prefer guiding the, comparatively, ignorant myriads of the working community, through the medium of Literary and Mechanics' Institutes, to a knowledge of literature and science; or bowing in mock deference to the noisy clamours of multitudes testifying their applause of talents and wisdom they did not understand, and against the possessors of which, by a turn of popular favour, they would next day launch their invectives. There can, in fact, be little or no choice in the matter. Let them only, divested of prejudice and interest, examine the diverse positions in which they would stand—let them consider the nature, the nobleness, and the immortality of

mind—its susceptibilities of everything exalted and pure, and its longing for a state of higher existence; and then will they perceive that to instruct it is to place before it a true mirror of itself, to emancipate it from chains and darkness, and set all its springs of action in motion—to instruct it is, in a lofty sense, to enlarge, to civilize, to etherealize it, and raise higher the shrine of its ambition for the morals and politics of time and the deep solemnities of eternity.

The era, or rather let me say the long reign of ignorance, during which the chicanery of parties, and political knowledge was chiefly monopolized by the aristocracy and the ascendant classes, has been swept away. The period which ushered in the French revolution, and during which the people, the masses, if you please, but still the people, the sinews of the nation's strength, and the bulwarks of its defence, were styled by the eloquent Burke, as he pointed to the grovelling, effervescent, blood bespattered mob of Paris, "that swinish multitude,"—that fearful period redolent of Apocalyptic tempests and earthquakes, though shaking Europe to its centre, and illuminating the nations with a volcanic glare, instead of a beacon light, still, through its murky atmosphere, scattered rays of intelligence, and awoke from their apathy the minds of enquiring myriads. Of their political rights they dreamt not. Of the intrigues and debaucheries of courts,—of the complex and hollow machinations of statesmen they heeded not; and hence so long as they slumbered thus, ministers knew they could trample upon them with impunity, and torture loyal

expressions into constructive treason;—debauched bankrupt princes, that they could extort their ignorant homage, and brilliant orators, that they could cast at them the sneer of contempt, and provoke the approving smile. But where is now such mental and political prostration? How many ministers can now point the finger of scorn, launch the arrow of ridicule, or designate the working classes of this country by the approbrious terms which fifty years ago might have been applied to them?

A comprehensive knowledge of the laws of nations, the policies of states, and the somewhat mysterious shiftings of governments to consolidate and adjust the balance of power, it may, in some respects be difficult for the working man fully to learn. But such have been the lights struck out by the collision of opposing parties, and the wars of nations during the last fifty years, and such has been the eagerness of the people to gaze into the causes and consequences of political convulsions and changes, that an amazing change has occurred in the aspect and constitution of society. The school-master has, indeed, been abroad. Men, though born to labour, have learnt what is their proper station in society, and now think for themselves. They will not have tyrants to rule over them, as they have now been trained in the school of governments. They will not have self-interested monopolists to legislate for them, as they can now legislate practically, for themselves. Nor will they, without indignant remonstrance, allow any court oligarchy to thwart the current of justice, or turn the stream of truth from its proper course to suit the schemes of

trimming statesmen or profligate adventurers. Deep is general knowledge striking its roots. Deep is the interest now taken in the political character and aspect of our country and its colonial dependencies, and our connection with foreign nations. And should any infatuated king or minister henceforth attempt to cast chains around the fermenting minds of a free and thinking people, as was done in France, tremendous must be the convulsion,—ominous and exemplary the doom of the despot.

The phantom which has often been ominously conjured up by the heated fancies of our better informed circles, and our aristocracy, of a revolutionary levelling of rank, wealth, and distinction, if knowledge, and hence, power became general, has been chased away; or now only exists among a singular, isolated few, who imagine that discontent at existing abuses naturally indicates a restless desire for portioning out, and carving at the property of others, as did a few of our European despots seize upon, and partition out Poland for their vulture feast. That the holders of such opinions are singular anomalies in the regions of intellect, cannot be denied; so much so, indeed, that the actual advocates of such a scheme of levelling could scarcely surpass them in the wildness of their dreams. Knowledge, we imagine, has been so universally acknowledged as the great civilizer of men and nations, that only such as those who, apeing the lords of the feudal ages, wish to do what they like with their own, can hold such crotchets. When did knowledge ever cause the working classes to misinterpret nature, to strain at known impossi-

bilities, or promote universal anarchy and bloodshed? Have not these doctrines, if ever sincerely entertained, been suppressed by reason as knowledge has increased? Is it not a known truth that as men, generation after generation, have become more enlightened, the higher classes have been, when worthy, more respected, property been more secure, all humane and benevolent institutions been more cheerfully supported, just and beneficent laws been more promptly obeyed, and all true moral and intellectual greatness been more venerated and admired? If so, why should knowledge, by the exclusive educationists, be blamed for creating that which it so imperatively condemns and crushes? If it produces an effect so unhallowed in the minds of the working classes, how have the aristocracy become exempt from its influence? Are their natures different? No; but only let the working classes eschew politics for ever, and the phantom of the grim-levelling monster will for ever vanish. Let them hear the church, obey the priest, reverence the bishop and the mitre, bow to the squire and the gamekeeper, shout for the divine right of kings and the glory of war, but be deaf and insensible to the secrets of sensual courts, and the oppressions of arbitrary governments; and then will they be counted wise and loyal, and ignorance be considered a blessing.

But if examples from history were needed to confirm the statement, and exhibit in strong and eternal colours, the sanguinary horrors of that anarchy consequent upon an attempt at levelling all distinctions, and the opposite effects of progres-

sive knowledge, in dislodging and chasing away the dreadful phantom, we need look no further than to the tumultuous proceedings in France during the latter end of the last, and the thirtieth year of the present century. In no nation of the world has two more sweeping revolutions occurred, than those which stand so pre-eminent in her history. And, in all their peculiar characteristics, no two overturns of governments, and dethronements of monarchs, stand more strongly contrasted: the one accompanied by a moral and mental darkness, as intense as if the sun of the intellectual world had been extinguished, and the distinction between right and wrong razed from the hearts and the consciences of men; the other brought about by the dictatorial tyranny of a despotic government over a free-minded people, characterised, on the other hand, by those enlightening traits of human wisdom and forbearance, which cast the violence of the demagogue and the intrigues of the subtle priestcraft into the shade.

In 1791 and the following years, urged on to their deeds of horror by the uproarious engines of atheism and infidelity, under the sounding titles of philosophy and freedom, they acted as men under the spell of some dreadful fatality neither possessing, nor, when under the dictation of such sanguinary leaders, worthy the possession of freedom. In 1830, though smarting under the lash of despotism, they displayed a picture changed in all its features; they showed to the world that freedom, not in the abstract, but that real freedom—freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom from

all the restrictive mandates of tyrannical laws—and not the creation of a second moral chaos, was their high and only aim; and that, though formerly under an awful spell and, when so fettered, unworthy of what is the legitimate birthright of all, they could demand, in all its privileges, the high but natural prerogative of liberty. And what produced the change? Forty years had nigh elapsed, and education had progressed, and, with the sad experience of the former revolution in their memory, plucked the film from their intellectual vision, and poured in the enlightening rays of truth. Knowledge had changed their nature, tamed its ferocity and softened its harshness, showing that where it is extensive there is extensive moral power, and that where moral power holds commanding influence, the outbreaks of physical violence are few in number and diminished in force.

When knowledge, therefore, in such an alarming crisis of a nation's history, is so instrumental in depressing physical violence, deepening and widening the wisdom of the people, and driving, as with the birch of the schoolmaster, the hated forms of anarchy and wholesale butchery from her shores, it at once gives a disclaimer to all the groundless fears of an alarmed aristocracy, lest the education of the people should render them dissatisfied, weary of subordination, and ready to rise in revolt against the privileged few, with the avowed intention of making an universal levelling of wealth, rank and distinction throughout the land. From the example just noticed, the education of the people is the only effective safeguard against that revolt they dread.

It were in vain attempting to persuade an ignorant and infuriated crowd, when revolting against the constitution of society and anxious to reduce all classes to a level, that, before a reconstruction of society could take place upon their wild utopian plans, a radical change must take place in human nature, to prepare the way and lay the foundation of the fabric. The arguments against their new principles will seem feeble and futile. They will see no necessity for a gradation of wealth and rank, for one man's interest weighing heavier in the balance of distinction than another's, and will fondly cherish the wild chimera that an equalization of wealth and property, all over the earth, is all that is wanting to crown mankind with uninterrupted happiness.

But, take the same body of men and carry them through a progressive course of sound education, and then see whether they will cherish the same affection for the measures for which they so loudly clamoured. They will then perceive the wildness—the incongruity of their visions; they will then see that the levelling for which they were the strenuous advocates could no more last, for three consecutive days, without the annihilation of the selfish and the ambitious principles in man, than could the fertility of the earth remain the same during the revolution of the seasons, were the mountains levelled, the valleys exalted, and the whole surface transformed into a swampy, spongy flat. Gradations of intellectual power and acquirements, and the different uses made of mental superiority and original bent, they will then perceive, lay, in a great measure, the

foundation of those diversities of rank and wealth which obtain wherever mankind are found; and that without that gradation, so much condemned, of wealth and distinction, among all classes, it is impossible the labour and industry, so essential for the comfort of the industrious themselves, as well as the higher portion of our fellow-men, could be carried on; and that, therefore, the fostering of their own comfort in earthly matters, and the great ends to be obtained by the expansion and refinement of their capacities, can only be acquired by labour, by emulation to excel, to rise a degree above their fellows, and shine in the horizon a mark for the emulation of others. This distinction between classes, as some assert, was founded and is upheld by power; but it was, and is, intellectual power, and the ends it is made to subserve, which effects more than physical power. And where are the men, in the present age, holding the prerogatives of real power over the minds of others, but they who wield it by minds of surpassing grasp and attainments, determined to use them in the furtherance of objects worthy the means they possess?

This in itself were a sufficient proof of the great advantages of knowledge, as it shews, at least, that there is a levelling in the universe of mind—that the aristocracy of wealth and titled distinction carry not with them into their courtly atmosphere, the distinctions and exclusive attributes of mind, or intellectual riches; for it is a proof of this, that among the benefactors of our country, or of any country, more have arisen from the walks of common life than have ever sprung from the castles of the nobility.

You cannot rear the oak, which must contend with the storm and the whirlwind, in the hothouse; so neither can you expect the masculine-minded scion of intellectual royalty to spring up to gigantic stature in the regions of courts, and in society where sycophancy breathes paralysing flattery and poisons the mind. Such empty fopperies, in truth, affect not the masculine minds of those bent upon the nobler achievements of intellectual championship; they for a time may look at them and listen to them, but only in effect to despise them; and prefer leading on the public to war against war and its evils, against ignorance and its debasements, and against that moral pestilence in its many shapes and colours, which spreads its miasma over the land. •

When we find, therefore, that there is no moral or intellectual distinction of classes, we find a thorough levelling in all that is truly essential for the elevation of man. The knowledge of the working classes is in truth a boon to the aristocracy. By shielding them from having despotic laws thrust tyrannically upon them, the lawgivers are excluded, however unwillingly, from legislating in the spirit, at least in the letter, of open tyranny, and are so far saved from practical crime. And the more they perceive the knowledge of the humble tradesman rise, and threaten to surpass their own, the more will it excite their own stagnant energies, and move them to climb loftier summits than they ever dreamt of attaining. And thus the industry of the people, while supporting the pyramid whose point represents the titled few, is also the lever raising them still higher and higher in the scale of mental excellence.

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The more strenuously, therefore, the privileged classes of a nation cultivate their mental powers, the more decidedly will they establish the points of distance separating themselves and the people, destitute of their opportunities; and the more openly and truly will they elicit that respect and homage which they conceive their birthright, than if gorged and garished, like a Becket or a Wolsey, with all that wealth could purchase, while the intellect within, like a mine of hidden gold, was untouched by the fires of purification and refinement.

“ Yes, Julian, I have run the weary race
Of life, and seen the humble trodden down;
The sorrow-stricken shed their bitter tears;
The hungry, pale and sunken, beg their bread;
The houseless wanderer tremble in the blast,
And blighted virtue look askance in woe;
While the rich lordling, and the bloated squire,
Whose heel oppressed them, and whose lust seduced,
Alike did scorn their plaints with bitter lip,
And called them curs, and slaves, and needy villains.
Ay, Julian; but I know that true-born greatness,
In prince or peer, ne’er scoffed at lowly virtue,
But rather nursed, and drew forth all its sweetness,
And reaping for their labour of its goodness:
• For virtue, like the flowers which load the breeze
With balmy incense, breathing health around,
Belongs to all conditions and all climes.
The rich who have it, should by good example
Instruct the poor, the ignorant, and needy,
And teach them how to know and love their God.
And thus in turn, the poor might circle round
Among their brethren knowledge, virtue, peace,
And elevate themselves and those they teach,
By thus fulfilling heaven’s most holy purpose.

For, mark me, Julian, he on earth is greatest,
Who loves his Maker most, and most does shew
That love to God ensures his love to man,
And proves that he fulfils His high behests
By raising virtue and eschewing vice,
Diffusing truth and knowledge o'er the earth,
And softening down the curse which clings to all."

JARVIS TUNSTALL.



ON SOME BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE.

“The tree of knowledge is both fair and good,
When with discretion and success 'tis woo'd.
Unlock the cabinets of earth, and see
The riches and the glories spread for thee,
And treasure up the wisdom thence which springs,
Alike for clowns, for artizans, and kings.
Trace history through every winding maze,
And mark how Providence its hand displays,
In placing in their spheres things great and small,
And watching with Omniscient eye o'er all,
Upsetting crowns, and dynasties, and now
Consummating an empire's overthrow.”

JARVIS TUNSTALL.

IN everything connected with our probationary state, the views and the hopes we entertain for the future, are based, in a great degree, upon the experience of the past. Man, in fact, lives in the future. Every moment which makes its exit into the abyss of past infinitude, projects his mind a moment further into the abyss of the future, whilst the analogies drawn from the past paint clouds or sunbeams upon the distant prospect, in proportion as his previous career has been scarred by misfortune or cheered by success. *Hope* looks forward and illumines the darkness with her iris hues; *memory*, the storehouse and index

of the past, is turned into the compass which, by the guidance of judgment, directs him how to steer his passage amidst the frowns and smiles, the storms and calms alternately vexing and soothing the ocean of human life. And what the experience of the past is personally to individuals, it is to mankind in the aggregate, combined by mutual interests into families, communities, and nations; and the improvement and progress of a nation collectively, will always be proportioned to the improvement of the individuals composing it. And hence, when knowledge sets free the captive mind from the most degrading of all slavery—the slavery of ignorance—it will prove the only effective means of chasing from this land of boasted progress and enlightenment, the turmoils of violence and faction, the unprincipled turbulence of the noisy demagogue, and the audacity of the despot.

We cannot, however, as a people, mark our progress in arts and science, in political or moral progress, without some knowledge of our past existence and character. History is, therefore, brought to assist us in forming our estimate. But history will often disappoint us. We will find that it is not the simple annals of domestic life, nor the general industrial progress of society, nor even, except at some period when some great excitement, important from its effects upon trade or commerce, has aroused the national anxiety, that the varied circumstances of the population of a city, or the debates and turmoils of its councils, afford matter for the pen of the historian. He must record the wickedness, cruelties, and intrigues of courts; the governments, characters,

and fate of kings; the wars of nations and the slaughter of millions; the tyrannies of power, triumphing over justice and truth; with all the appalling train of evils springing from the thirst of ambition, the passion for rule, and the determination to mount the throne, though planted amidst the carnage of battle and within reach of the assassin's uplifted hand. And it seems only when the path of history is thus streaked with blood, and its details are most intense and thrilling, that it holds forth the least attraction to some minds; as if some of our fellow-beings exulted in finding recorded and transmitted from century to century the deep-seated, the almost fiendish appetites of their ancestors, for plunder and war.

The celebrated maxim of Bolingbroke, that "history is philosophy, teaching by example," is an undeniable truism. Philosophy, which means simply the investigation of truth, while presenting human nature before us, as operated upon by, and in connection with, all human contingencies, may be said to base its speculations upon theory. But to assert that the views taken were wholly theoretical, would be wrong, as the philosopher, in exhibiting and analysing his emotions, deducing his system of morals, or his schemes for governing nations, merely draws his inferences and conclusions from the lessons taught by history; and thus, both shows the action, the example, and the philosophy deducible from it. The great fact, therefore, that history exemplifies the maxims of true philosophy in the varied pictures and estimates it sets forth of human nature in all ages and nations of the world, is a sufficient reason for

affirming that its interesting pages should be attentively perused. A study so dignified in its character, so interesting in its facts and picturesque descriptions, so elevating and calculated for enlarging the mind, so useful for exercising and strengthening the memory and rivetting the attention—and, withal, a study, popularly considered, requiring none of the severest exercises of the mind—ought, as one of the noblest and instructive, to receive the earliest attention of every inquiring mind. At times we may find facts garbled by prejudice, seen through a magnifying mist, or inadvertently falsified by mistake; but still the events narrated appeal at once to the heart, as springing directly from, and, in most respects, giving a correct view of what the fallen nature of man is capable of producing. Though it substitutes the observations of others for our own, and requires in a great degree our unconditional faith in their testimonies, when we ourselves cannot ascend, step by step, laboriously along all the lines of fact and evidence to remote fountain-heads, it displays before us in strong, though often in disgusting colours, the practical operations of those energies and affections of the heart most conducive, when well regulated, for the well being of society, but which, when uncontrolled by reason, precipitate their victims in the black career of guilt and degeneracy,—in the track of ambition and war through carnage and blood, or the equally guilty paths of religious or ecclesiastical impostors, in duping the ignorant and debased of mankind with their infernal rites and juggling conjurations.

As this study is, therefore, one of the noblest and

most instructive, it ought to receive the early attention of every inquiring mind. • Lord Byron, whose historical reading was most extensive, was passionately fond of it when eight years old, when he pondered over the pages of Gibbon's Roman Empire. What an enlargement of mind is received from reading the conversational, though half fabulous but wonder-telling narratives of Herodotus—the more severe and dignified history of Thucydides, and Xenophon's Retreat of the Ten Thousand—the stern, truth-telling Lives of Plutarch, or the sparkling pages of Livy! Or, in coming down to our own age and the preceding, who cannot but be interested in the deep research and learned patience of Gibbon, and the beauties of his massive style—in the beauty, clearness and strength of Hume, even though his history be blemished by the spirit of the advocate and special pleader; or in the stately march and equable periods of Robertson, alike at home in Spain, in India, in Scotland, and in America! Members there may be, and doubtless are, of many Mechanics' Institutes and Literary Societies, who cannot find time to peruse the classic histories of antiquity, or all the principal historians of modern times, but we do hold him guilty of a dereliction of duty to himself, who, possessing the opportunity, has not at least read attentively the fruitful history of his native land.

But, though historical knowledge may, and does assist in teaching sound and important moral lessons, and, by holding up to public view old, time-worn, and rotten institutions, and the practical evils flowing from former systems of government, tend to bring

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about a political and social regeneration, there are also other pleasures and deductions to be drawn from its study. It is interesting in tracing history up to its fountain-head, and viewing the migration of different tribes into different countries, to trace the greatest empires from their cradles to their summits of greatness, and search through their constitutions, governments, and crimes, into the causes conspiring to undermine their prosperity and sink them in ruin. Nor is it less interesting to search into the nature and depths of their religious and philosophic systems, and their effects upon the people and kingdoms espousing them; and into the many, all but indivisible, points of difference between the territories and the policies of states; and the slight causes of offence often seized upon by jealous and ambitious rulers as incentives for plunging into war, and struggling for the conquest of neighbouring kingdoms, and the captivity or assassination of their monarchs. And in nothing, according to the testimony of many profound writers, is profane history more interesting and useful, than when the many coincidences of fact, in point of character and time existing between it and the Mosaic history are compared, brought to the test of truth, and made subservient for strengthening and illustrating the incontrovertible truths of Scripture narrative. In investigating the traditions now extant, of all ancient nations, they have been found exactly to coincide, even in minuter details, varying only in general terms and allusions, according to the superstitions of the nations holding them, with the explicit declarations of Moses concerning the creation of the world, or rather its present forma-

tion from a pre-existent chaos,—man's happy state and fall, and the subsequent destruction of the whole human family, except a remnant, by a deluge; and many allusions to other historical details, which, like that in the Greek Mythology, of Deucalion, and the Flood of Thessaly, adds an additional pillar, if any were required, more than existing evidences, to uphold the eternal claims of Scripture to universal belief and adoption.

In perusing the history of our own country, we find periods and events which, like conspicuous landmarks, gather around them men and circumstances productive of other great events, which give a bent and a colour to the historic scenes and characters of other generations, and to all times. Of these, the history of the Reformation—the reign of Elizabeth, with its literary and philosophic glories, the civil war and the execution of the king—the Commonwealth—the Restoration, and the Revolution of 1688—are alike distinguished for great political events and changes, and their fertility in the production of great men. The whole of the literature of ancient Greece in its various forms, is little but a panegyric on liberty; and so long as it exists, and is diffused directly and indirectly through the public mind, in our own or in any country, it is impossible for the spark of liberty to be extinguished in the human breast. And so of the literature of those epochs in the history of our own land. When the genius of Shakespere has ceased to irradiate the many phases of human nature; when the name and the propelling genius of Bacon is withdrawn from knowledge and science; when the burning thoughts and lan-

guage of Milton have ceased to inspire the pæans of liberty, and clothe tyranny in its hateful colours; and when the statesmen and heroes of that age—its Cromwell, Pym and Hampden, Vane and Sydney, Marvel and Russell—have been blotted from the pages of history as corrupting studies for the human mind—then, and not till then, will the death-knell of our liberty be rung, or intellectual slavery and intolerance, armed with racks and thumb-screws, wield the sceptre, and trample upon the constitution of these blood-purchased realms.

But, independent of the usefulness with which the study of history may bear upon the formation of the mind, and the tendency it may have, by exhibiting the errors of past statesmen, to warn others from the quicksands of legislation and turn them upon a more enlightened track, it carries with it a pleasure, a more absorbing interest, than any other single intellectual exercise in which the mind can indulge. It falsifies in some degree the declaration that man lives in the future. It carries us back into the long withdrawing labyrinths of the past, and places us upon an eminence whence time's winding stream, with all the the figures and events crowding, shifting, and expiring, like flashing meteors upon its surface, attract the mental eye. Through its changing mirror we behold arise from the deep commingling elements of a rude chaos, fashioned into all its beauty and magnificence the stupendous fabric of the universe. We seem to see intelligence created where non-existence reigned. We arise with the spread of mankind, and wing our flight into all the regions of the then known globe, sit councillors in the senates

of mighty nations, breathe the atmosphere of tyranny, mingle in the carnage of battle, wander through the cities of Greece with the sightless Homer as he chaunted his immortal song, listen, absorbed in sorrow and admiration, to the last discourse of Socrates, ere he raised the hemlock to his lips, and gaze in wrapt wonder as the winged words roll in torrents from the eloquent tongue of him who fulminated over Greece. We follow the victorious Alexander in his conquests, see him console the weeping family of Darius; weep with him when, yet in his youth, he imagines he will have no more worlds to conquer; and at last behold him unable to conquer his lusts, sink, overcome, into the arms of death, the vanquisher. With Hannibal, the foe of Rome, we pass the frozen region of the untrodden Alps, and follow him in his career of victory until Scipio turns the tide, see prophecy fulfilled in the end and division of the once great Macedonian empire in the defeat of Perseus, follow the army of Regulus in the encounter with the serpent, and sit gazing in mournful contemplation with Marius, among the ruins of Carthage.

From history we naturally turn to Philosophy, and here what a field for contemplation presents itself—attractive, interminable, yet rich, dignified, and noble in proportion to its ample range. There is little in human life, but what, in some measure, is mixed up with abstraction and speculation; and few believe, or at least consider, when travelling the prescribed round of human existence, that every action, and every important design, is a basis of a portion of that high philosophy, grounded upon

existing views of human nature. The thought, the motive, and the action are inseparably combined with the counterpart philosophy or moral. All have a tendency for evil or for good. There is no medium—no stand still—in the ever-rushing current of human existence. And, hence, the influences ever emanating and extending in endless circles around us throughout society in all its relations, will not cease with our probation in time, but extend onwards and onwards along eternity, and in distant worlds. So true is this that, if we could conceive of one human thought or action, or series of actions clustering into events, being diverted from their proper course, and made subservient for other purposes than were ordained by Providence, society might become deranged, and all the social and political machinery of every tribe and nation of the world rush into chaos; even as one atom of matter taken from the particles of this globe and placed upon the surface of the remotest planet or cast into the abyss of annihilation, would work a corresponding change throughout the whole system of the universe. And though we cannot trace the influences of thought and action in their direct but, apparently, conflicting course, any more than we can trace the path of the ship on the ocean, there is nothing uncertain in their effects. As no atom of matter, whether in the elastic atmosphere, in the ocean, borne in the sand columns of the desert, or in other worlds, was ever lost, or failed in passively performing its appointed work in the mighty plan, so no thought shall fail working out the part assigned it in the problem of the universe.

If we consider the characters of Napoleon Buonaparte, of Julius Cæsar, or of Alexander the Great, in whose hands, humanly speaking, rested the eternal destinies of millions, and endeavour fully to trace, through all their often invisible ramifications, the influences of their conquests upon the world, at their respective ages and downwards, we will find ourselves "in wandering mazes lost." Yet, by narrowing the circles, by keeping out of view the armies, the nations, and the corroding cares of state resting on them, and considering singly the master minds of the movements, we will find ourselves as unable to trace the many causes influencing them individually, as in their more enlarged spheres, and in connection with millions. What events have conspired, for instance, to give the first impulse, in childhood, and at the Military School at Brienne, or among the sickening scenes of the Revolution, to the mainspring of Napoleon's desires? How many circumstances and actions apparently trivial in themselves, often crossing each other, as if to defeat his plans, yet by some, seemingly, fortuitous concurrence of events, appear formed, as if on purpose, by a controlling agency to subserve his plans, inflame still higher his burning ambition, and enlarge his grasp? Then, mark! how success but enlarges desire — how possession cannot satisfy his insatiable mind, but still urges him on, step by step, over thrones and through blood, to grasp at crowns and add nations to his projected world estate. Here, it is evident that the innumerable influences effervescing around and urging him forward, as if, as he himself imagined, the creature of a strange destiny, are as

far hidden and mysterious to us, except in their actual palpable results, as are the more wide-spread and conflicting influences penetrating and moving the aggregate minds of Europe, all influenced by that master mind which, invisibly, but fearfully and effectually, moved them all.

Such questions though, doubtless, beyond the pale of clear investigation, and calculated to mystify the minds of the most profound thinkers, are, nevertheless, questions which had, and have, their philosophy; and which, even at the present day, serve as far as the actions and their moral and political bearings are concerned, to give scope to contemplation, and illustrate the positions of philosophers in their analysis and estimate of human nature. Such considerations serve also to shew that, if no atom of matter be unimportant in its place and position, the immortal mind of man must be of infinitely more importance in the scale of creation; and though but a unit among hundreds of millions, and shrunk, in his humility, among so many greater and richer than himself, into something like an abstract quantity—he yet, as a drop amidst the heaving ocean of life, possesses a mighty influence, and, though unknown to fame, is deeply impressing his mind and his character upon society by his actions. Though no Oxford Puseyite or fox-hunter, or no Cambridge mathematician or philologist, the working man, wielding his influence for the benefit and good of his race, can rise high in the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue, and become a central sun to others less enlightened than himself. The word *philosophy*, and the name of *philosopher*, may

sound strange and high in associations, and he may not easily be induced to believe that all men are philosophers, in proportion as they cast their minds about in search of truth wherever it may be found. "Many are poets, who have never penned their inspirations," is an expression Byron has put into the mouth of Dante; and many are philosophers of deep thought and enlightened views, who have never publicly expressed their thoughts, but who, nevertheless, have been instrumental in adding to the national wealth, honour and fame—riches more palpable, widely felt, and enduring, than the flimsy lucubrations of many theorists, who have filled volumes with their dreamy speculations. Many are, therefore, philosophers who claim not the title, who disown the name, as too lofty and high sounding for their humble aspirations, while many unworthy the name would fain lay claim to all its honours. ●

"How seldom friend, a good great man inherits
Honour and wealth, with all his worth and pains?
It seems a story from the world of spirits
When any man obtains that which he merits,
Or any merits that which he obtains."

A Watt, an Arkwright, and a Stephenson have been instrumental, through their inventions, of increasing the amount and enhancing the value of our produce, accelerating the speed of our intercourse, and raising to an unexampled height, the prosperity, wealth, and character of our country, by its commerce and manufactures in the markets of the world; and are not such men deserving of niches as high in the temple of philosophy, and names as

illustrious in the rolls of fame, as any mere dreamy theorist who burns his midnight lamp, and fills volumes with impracticable speculation. Look at Brindley; he had no mathematical skill in sketching plans and diagrams, yet, by the force of his clear practical intellect and unconquerable perseverance, he overcame difficulties in the construction of his bridges and canals, which would have baffled more scientific architects, who, indeed, sneered at his projects, and became the first practical engineer of his age. And who can tell but that from among the young men connected with our Mechanics' and other Institutes, and People's Colleges, some may arise to gain the title of benefactors of their country, and dispute the empire of philosophy with some who have, undeservedly, been awarded the crown, and had their names sounded by the trump of fame.

Upon mental and moral science, we need not here expatiate. The field of discussion is so vast and fruitful, and though simple, yet apparently complicated, that a considerable number of papers or lectures would be necessary for doing it justice. The subject is one, however, of great and varied importance, in all its branches; nor is a full knowledge of its abstract truths and relations alone necessary to the statesman, in assisting him in the enactment of laws in accordance with the popular mind—to the physician in prying more clearly into the nature and cure of diseases, whether bodily or mental, nor to the minister of religion in tracing moral diseases to their source and preparing the heart for the application of the divine antidote—the

knowledge of the philosophy of mind, as forming the basis of the moral system of the world, is equally essential for enlightening the minds, furthering and amplifying the views, and so tending to sweeten and elevate the intercourse between individuals in every class of society. When we consider what the human mind is, how deep are its emotions—how rapid are its movements—how comprehensive its range of thought, and how commanding its energies, we must be struck with the extent of study which the subject involves, and the depth of analysis required for its mastery. Independent of all the results which flow from its careful study, it is a noble discipline for the mind. Let any one, as yet unacquainted with the subject, commence, and carefully go through Dr. Thomas Brown's one hundred eloquent lectures upon the subject, and his mind will have received a tutorage, and be irradiated with a new, and, in many points, a mysterious but useful light. That its speculations can never be brought to the test of demonstration we know, and that its reasonings and objects, may, and do seem to have but little utility in the common business of life we also know; but so long as pure knowledge elevates and enlarges the mind, mental philosophy must be fruitful in enlarging the narrow limits of human thought, and refining and elevating the understandings of all who delight in its study, and hence, by a reflex law of nature, operate beneficially for humanity at large.

“That these studies are of a very dignified and interesting nature, we admit most cheerfully—that they exercise and delight the understanding, by

reasonings at once subtle, cautious, and profound, and either gratify, or exalt a keen and aspiring curiosity, must be acknowledged by all who have been initiated into its elements." *

Mental Science, it is true, can, in many points, be scarcely understood when considered simply by itself; but, when prefaced by a full inquiry into the histories of all ages, and aided in many of its most interesting and severe abstractions, by the practical illustrations which history affords, the philosophy both of mind and morals is seen exemplified, and brought home to the understanding by the most cogent and powerful attestations of its truth. We then perceive that, from the earliest date of human existence, into whatever ages or nations the stream of history carries us, or with whatever actions or events it acquaints us, that the dictator, conscience, held supreme right to rule over the emotions of every heart; and, though seldom, indeed, receiving from the subjected passions, often rebellious, that deference due to its sacred authority, still held the sceptre of the monarch in the breasts of the mightiest kings, the most despotic tyrants, and the lowest subjects—in the terror-stricken heart of Nero, and the most untutored savage—in the burning breast of the traitor Catiline, and the dignified bosom of Cicero. We then likewise find, unravelled from the knotty skein of sophistry into which scepticism entangles it, that, notwithstanding the distances between localities and manners—the mystifying mythologies

* Lord Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*. Reply to Dugald Stewart.

and irrational superstitions of settled nations and wandering tribes of men, one code of virtue, one universal sense of moral obligation between man and man and between man and his Maker—or if God be not clearly manifested to savage nations, between man and some great mysterious power drawing forth his voluntary homage—obtained, and still obtains among all mankind. And were all effects carefully traced up to their causes, much of the miseries afflicting mankind, in the various relations of life, would be found to spring from a deep-rooted ignorance of the laws and the working of the human mind, and, through that ignorance, from a tendency to touch those chords of feeling in the bosoms of others, most easily shaken and wrung, and productive of much of that bitterness and anger, and deep-rooted aversion, circulating among all classes. If we look to the question of marriage alone, we shall not fail to perceive that the disunited affections—the jarring, and the evil thoughts continually brooding and boiling in the bosoms of husband and wife, and often bursting forth in wrath and collision—had, and have still for their foundation, a total ignorance of the nature of the diversities of mind, and hence, a want of that perception which would have revealed to themselves their total uncongeniality of minds, feelings, and tempers, and thus have enabled them to avoid that union which they must have foreseen would be embittered by discord and strife; lessons which, when taught openly to children, by their imprudent examples, too often entails a curse of a diffusive nature to succeeding generations.

Deep, however, as the learned metaphysician may plunge in his analysis of the human mind, and its emotions, he will still find it, viewed through whatever medium, in its actual nature and essence, a mystery unfathomable by human reason. We feel its powers within us, and are conscious of its effects upon the material agent the body, by the actions immediately following its volitions. Its inconceivable swiftness—its boundless range of thought—its incessant and unwearied activity, and comprehensive grasp still enlarging the sphere of its cogitations, intimate, in connection with other phenomena, that it is destined to a nobler existence. From the first dawn of reason to the extreme verge of the eternal world, its high aim is happiness and expansion; and at the dread hour of dissolution, shrinking aghast from the gloomy gulf of annihilation, it embraces the hope of an immortal existence in some state of more positive happiness, where it may bloom with eternal verdure, and expand its unflagging wings for ever. To this hope it has, among every kindred and tongue, in every age and nation, clung with the utmost tenacity. The Greek and the Roman looked forward to it with fear, when surrounded by all the rites and twilight of heathenism;—the savage in the midst of the wilderness anticipates it, though darkly, and the christian enlightened by the beams of revelation rejoices in its truth. Could the mind by any process become satiate with, or reach the full stature of its intellectual strength and knowledge, then might we think it had also reached the full maturity of its being, and would henceforth decay and sink by easy stages into

nonentity. But time cannot limit its desires. The more wisdom and knowledge it accumulates in time, the more eager its appetite for a more boundless expansion—for luxuriating amidst the scenes and wonders of a world to come. And hence, when every hope and every fear tells us, though inaudibly, of an immortality, how desirous is it that we should be storing up knowledge and wisdom here, since when we plume our wings for the flight to the regions beyond, our faculties will be more energetic, our grasp more comprehensive, and our perceptions more acute, and better fitted to expatiate amidst the wonders and glories of a beatific world.

And what department of science contained within the circle of natural philosophy, is more calculated to enlarge the mind and draw forth its energies than astronomy? The immensity of Creation, it is true, places an insurmountable barrier against the rational indulgence of that ambition which would fain scan the system of systems circling through space. But our inability to scale the stars should not damp the ardour of our enquiries, nor render us sluggish and inert, but rather stimulate us forward to try what actual discoveries can be made—what hitherto unexplored regions can be trod—how quick and energetic—how vast and comprehensive the immaterial mind can become through its contact with the world of matter. A want of the high mathematics necessary for enabling us to gain a full knowledge of this science, so far as its limits and phenomena are known, will, doubtless, prevent many from commencing its more elaborate study. But the simpler elements of the science as laid down in popular

treatises,—the construction of the planetary system, the distance of each planet from the sun, the different velocities with which they roll, the force of attraction as corresponding with the quantity of matter in each, and varying reciprocally with the squares of the distances of each planet from the sun, and of each satellite around its primary, with many facts connected with its vast scenery and laws, may all be comprehended without a knowledge of the geometry requisite for solving its more difficult problems. And though the science of astronomy does not bear with such force and utility upon the common concerns of life as the other sciences solely conversant with near material objects, it surpasses them all in lifting the mind above its ordinary sphere of thought, and bearing it into unknown realms where it may soar and expatiate without limits. And though, in many respects, the discovery, or partly, the invention of the mariner's compass, has supplanted the utility of the stars for the purposes of navigation, yet the eclipses of Jupiters moons, so essential for assisting in the right computation of longitudes, and hence, for assisting the mariner upon the ocean, and the geographer in his measurements, stands forth a beautiful adaptation between remote phenomena and the common business of life. Yet ere those distant phenomena can be brought to bear upon the important objects and ends they answer, a long mathematical calculation and analysis must, to the mind of the student, clear them of their ambiguities, thereby, in a great measure, placing them beyond the comprehension of the popular mind. But though the objects of astronomy be distant,—though their

vastness throws us back, in some measure from the heights we would fain occupy in scanning their cycles, we can, at least, in some degree, comprehend the grandeur and sublimity of their movements, as they roll oscillating within the prescribed limits of their periodic perturbations—we can perceive the wise adjustment of the opposing forces which keep the planets in their paths—we can perceive and admire, while we adore the depth of that designing wisdom which placed the sun in the centre of so many worlds to impart light, heat, and attraction to all, and extend pleasure and enjoyment to innumerable myriads of sentient and intelligent beings.

But decending from these starry spheres to our own earth, the science standing next in sublimity to Astronomy is, according to Sir John Herschell, Geology,—a science comparatively new, but every way deserving the high rank it has obtained, and the deep interest attached to its investigations. The wonderful discoveries made of late years within its appropriate regions, and the inferences drawn from thence, startled, like an electric shock, the reading and the religious world, into the belief, that an attack was made, and a war was henceforth to be waged with the scripture records of creation. Such belief, however, and the fears arising from it, seem wholly quashed. The science itself has been proved of high practical value, and, as such will, in time, enlist in its favour, the whole army of those *pseudo* philosophers, who argue that all virtue is placed in utility,—and that all other studies, poetic, or merely speculative, such as the pure mathematics, or the philosophy of mind, are at last submerged or lost, in

the onward current of human business and bustle of the world, and hence, as the dreams of vacant minds should be discarded for ever. With such dreamers, and there are many such around us, we have no manner of sympathy. *

But if astronomy, that un-utilitarian science, by the distance and vastness of its objects be the sublimest of the sciences,—geology claims its title to sublimity from the indefinite length of the earth's past duration, the revolutions it has undergone, and may yet undergo, so that sublimity, in the highest sense, is characteristic of both. We gaze upon a mighty ruin, once the abode of kings, or the sanctuary of a nation's worship, and muse upon it, until the very dead seem to revive and gather in solemn majesty around the hoary pile, thus sublime in its antiquity, its splendour decayed, and the associations with which the fancy of the living spectator clothes it; but what is the scene of a ruined temple, a sanctuary, a pyramid, or even the capital of a once mighty empire; or what the associations aroused by either compared with the more stupendous scenes of a ruined, yet splendid world, the scene of ancient ante-mundane revolutions, the theatre of creative interference, whose rocks speak of preorganized economies, whose animal remains proclaim the advent of life and death ere man was, and whose epochs of history are not measured by years, but by myriads of ages. Yet such are the facts which geology clearly sets forth. When we gaze upon the evening sky and dream of the happiness of the beings peopling those far off orbs, we for the time being, forget that our own earth forms one of the starry

system, and sweeps through space, perhaps exciting the wonder of other planetary beings, regarding our modes of existence and agency, in the way that our wonder is excited with regard to theirs. In truth whatever regards the world in a mass as a link of the planetary chain, regards it in an astronomical light, geologists prying into its details and decyphering its engraved hieroglyphics, regard it in a light less vast, less overwhelming to the mind, and hence, less imposing and sublime. If in astronomy we learn what is the form of a planetarium, but yet cannot comprehend that mighty being who rolls the orbs in their rounds,—then in geology we mark the operations of the same power, which, by volcanic agency, by shifting the poles for a single mile, or by transferring them to the equator, hurled the waters of a former ocean over the land, and, amidst the rush and chaos of elements, brought instant death upon all its inhabitants. We are carried back to distant and other economies of this earth and from its embedded remains learn something of the size and structure of those immense animals peopling its surface. So far as we know or shall ever learn, the condition of the planets and stars may have been the same;—our earth's conditions have been many. And not only are the manifestations of some destructive agency everywhere around us—we also learn that at every successive epoch, creative power was exerted to repeople its tenantless surface, with creatures adapted to its various elements. Thus the mind rises from viewing the effects of destruction, to contemplate creation and beauty and life. And for anything we know, such destructive revolutions may

again occur, and this earth be re-arranged for the habitation of some new order of beings.

Mineralogy, that branch or division of metallurgy, the peculiar province of which is to teach the manner of discovering and digging mines, and judging the nature of their produce, is closely connected with geology. Every mineralogist, in fact, ought to have a full knowledge of the structure of the earth, so far as can be known, combined with a knowledge of the mechanical sciences: of subterranean architecture, of mensuration, of hydraulics, and levelling; and, to render himself complete master of the science, in addition to the other branches of natural philosophy, he should be well versed in chemical principles and operations. Hence, a knowledge of geology is one important step towards a knowledge of mineralogy. Nor is there one branch of science required for its mastery but which is necessary in more or less degree for all kinds of mechanical operations. He who understands the laws of force and motion, the powers and uses of the inclined plane, the wedge, the lever, the pulley, and the screw, in their application in the process of mining, can be little short of a knowledge of the principles of mechanics necessary for engineering and the construction of the machinery of mills. The arithmetician whose knowledge of mensuration enables him to apply his skill in mineralogy, is necessarily a sufficient master of his art in the measurement of lands. The chemist possessing a competent skill in the nature of compound earths, salts, sulphurs, and bituminous matters, has considerable knowledge of the principles necessary for the preparation of acids and alkalies essential for

the processes of bleaching, and dying, and printing. And, perhaps, few of any profession know less of the principles upon which they work than these. "The dyer goes on dying all his life," says Brougham, "and at the end of his career knows little at all about the matter." * These professions are, in fact, branches of practical chemistry. And it must appear clear that without a knowledge of its first principles, no practical application of them can often be wholly correct; and hence the occasional failure of their professors in producing those perfect specimens of art or science which it is the great object of scientific inquiries and knowledge to produce. In attempting to imitate nature, we should establish our knowledge upon those true first principles by whose aid we may be assisted in faithfully copying the original; and then, and not till then, shall we effectually succeed in beguiling nature, the great teacher, of her colours, and transferring them to the artificial productions of man.

It may seem almost unnecessary, in passing, to mention geography, as that is a science so well understood, at least in its import, that no traveller, merchant, or mariner would willingly be considered ignorant of its rudiments and principal outlines; and surely no tradesmen or working men, who profess to be their own teachers, or who take an interest in the history of the bygone ages of the world, can fail to become familiar with the great divisions of the earth, the artificial boundaries of nations, and remarkable localities, the temperature of their climates,

* Address to the Manchester Mechanics' Institute.

the size and position of their capitals, their colour and dress, their language and attainments, their religious rites and observances, and their relations and commercial traffic and intercourse with other kingdoms and colonies. And, when so useful to the merchant and the mariner, and so interesting to the student of history, as the great finger-post pointing to the scenes of recorded events in ancient and modern times, surely to none can it be more useful and interesting than to the Sunday-school teacher and earnest scholar. This, indeed, has been perceived, and Biblical Atlases have been carefully prepared and illustrated, and sold at a price so low and inviting to all, that few teachers anxious for the welfare and progress of their classes in Scripture knowledge will be without them.

With botany, which teaches the nature and history of flowers—with ornithology, which teaches the nature and history of birds—with entomology, which teaches the nature and history of insects—with conchology, which teaches the nature and history of shells—with the natural history of animals and their mechanical organization; or with physical geography, or the history of nature conversant with its successive events, in contradistinction to natural philosophy, which treats of its various objects and phenomena, we need scarcely urge all anxious after obtaining general knowledge to obtain some acquaintance.

It certainly may seem anomalous to think that a knowledge of the facts brought to light by such study and researches can be, in the least degree, beneficial to the artisan or the mechanic. But,

should this be the opinion of one, the opinion of another may widely differ. Is there in the whole creation, from the greatest to the minutest objects, anything unworthy of contemplation or the expenditure of a thought? And while the proboscis of a fly, and the slender petal of the meanest flower, exhibit the most exquisite workmanship and skill, requiring the minutest microscopic investigation before we can judge of their hidden beauties, are there not minds of every cast, fitted exactly as counter-parts, and replete with a stimulating curiosity and a patience necessary for expatiating among the minutest, and seemingly, the most uninteresting portions of creation? There is thus elicited from a union of discordant tastes and opinions, arising among all gradations of intellect, a harmony and a consolidated strength, displaying a beauty of design and a power of execution, loudly proclaiming the transcendent wisdom of an Omniscient mind, and the power of an Omnipotent arm.

We have already glanced at mental philosophy, and our space will scarce permit us to mention the importance attached to a knowledge of the physiology of the body. Man, as seen moving in his sphere of agency, is a beautiful and noble piece of Divine architecture, proclaiming his Maker, as the exterior of a beautiful edifice, or a marble statue, may display the genius and taste of the human architect and sculptor. But the interior mechanism of the body must be seen anatomically before it can be understood perfectly. We may indeed know, and cannot but know without witnessing a dissected body, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made; but without

a view of all its apparently complicated machinery, its vital organs and digestive functions, we vainly attempt to master its details, and comprehend with exactness the compact adjustment in so narrow a space of all its intricate arrangements; and even then shall we be lost in wonder at the extreme delicacy of those valves and springs, and the slenderness of those fine-spun fibres, the nerves, the stoppage in their ceaseless play, or the snapping asunder of which, produces a paralysis of the part, or instant death.

There is a mystery connected with life, and an awful mystery connected with death. In life we admire the beauty, the elegance, the grace, and moving majesty of the human frame, but vainly attempt to fathom that union of matter and spirit, together constituting the man. And when death has wrought his fell havoc, and extinguished the intelligence, and quenched in night the fire once sparkling from the now glazed eye, the mystery thickens, and it almost seems as if materialism had gained a triumph. Reason, we fully believe, rejects the theory of the materialist, but the profound darkness enveloping the question, when the body, anatomized, displays such symmetrical arrangement, such intricacy, such nicety, such minute and interwoven mechanism, that the smallest accident or injury upon the vital parts produces death, can scarcely fail at times to lead to the conclusion that life, and hence intelligence, depends solely upon and springs from, organization. Nevertheless, when the question is once brought to the test of profound reasoning and inquiry, the proofs drawn from consciousness, from

instinct, or intuition, and from data brought on every side to bear upon the point, eventually explode the doctrine of the materialist, and triumphantly establish the fact of the spirituality of mind, and clearly illustrate the self-evident proposition, that matter, however organised, cannot originate mind—that death cannot evolve life.

We must now draw this lengthened paper to a close. We can only be said to possess true knowledge when, by the exercise of a judgment strengthened and matured by its precepts, we practically apply it in our actions and show it in our conversation. We must think and judge, as well as read. We must exercise our minds by comparing arguments—by ascertaining, as near as possible, the true facts, obscured too often by the colouring of counter-statements, whether in history or politics, and labour to form correct and impartial opinions of men and things, before our knowledge can be firmly grounded, or such as fully deserves the name. Truth, undisguised, must be our motto; and through the prodigious masses of rubbish hiding the precious jewel, we must penetrate, we must force our way. Amidst the jarring of factions—amidst the hosts of conflicting opinions, and the consequent agitation of society, truth is too often obscured; but a mind firmly determined to answer the question of Pilate—"What is truth?"—may, by observation, by reading and thinking profoundly, and judging correctly, find truth in all its naked beauty and unadorned majesty, throned in the centre of the universe, and reigning with supreme authority in the conscience of every human being.

MACAULAY'S CHARACTERISTICS.

THOUGH, in a general way, the names of periodical critics and essayists are not announced, and the public are often at a loss to know who holds the scalping-knife over the devoted book, it is seldom the case when a reviewer comes forth, time after time, to the work, but his manner is soon distinguished from that of his brethren—his style and execution seen to be so unique and characteristic, that when his name is once known, the reading public are soon able to detect him through his subsequent articles. Pains have, no doubt, been taken to keep the public in the dark, more especially when great severity has been used, and the vials of a burning ridicule have been poured on the head of the devoted author, who writhes beneath the infliction. But the veil has seldom been wholly drawn—the mysterious sanctuary of the invisible critic has seldom been kept wholly sacred to the censorious fraternity. The public have searching eyes and unwearied perseverance in solving such tantalising enigmas. Yet they have often been baffled; and often have errors been made by newspaper scribes, and acute readers.

in awarding to authors their respective contributions, through the presumed closeness of style of the various critics engaged. Long, indeed, was Jeffrey charged with the sin of Brougham in the matter of Byron's early poems; and often has Brougham been charged with the authorship of Macaulay's scorching criticism on Robert Montgomery's "Omnipresence of the Deity." But, after all, it may be supposed that the constitutional vanity of authors seldom allows them, when their works are successful, to be particularly anxious to hide their laurels. So long as the articles or volumes are anonymous, and the public are divided about their merits, and the right of parties to the praise or censure drawn forth, the authors may, for a time, remain in obscurity, and enjoy the wrangling of partizans about their claims to the lash or the reward, well knowing that the readers will criticise more freely, and, in general, speak the truth more openly and boldly, from their very ignorance of the authors. Occasionally the opposite of this may be the case, so long as favourite authors are criticised and praised, whatever be the subject or the merit of the performance. But anonymous authors, whether through reviews or otherwise, acting as spurs to the jaded public mind, will always be more freely criticised, simply because unknown. There may, also, be something particularly gratifying to the republic of authors, who launch forth article after article full of literary merit and pregnant with doctrines and arguments capable of revolutionizing taste — of changing or purging social institutions, and upon the ancient conventional dynasties of error and

tyranny, erecting bulwarks for the defence of truth and universal freedom—whilst the oracles themselves, shaded from the public gaze, command wonder and admiration from their very invisibility.

Such, for a length of time, were the impressions and changes produced in literature and politics by the “Edinburgh Review;” and as great was the anxiety of the public to ascertain the names of the contributors of the abler articles. But when the veil was partially rent—when the secret was partially divulged, and the great Aristarch of the North was discovered amidst his intellectual confederates, and they all appeared like ordinary mortals, the wonder began to cease. Jeffrey, in his dissecting-room, was only the keenest of intellectual anatomists, distinguished for metaphysical acuteness and vivacity. Brougham, the great epitome of all the talents, was only an intellectual Jupiter, hurling forth at times, in defiance of policy and prudence—as in the case of Don Pedro de Cevallos and the Government of Spain—his burning and withering Phillippics, to astonish and alarm. Sydney Smith appeared but the keenest of wits, and the raciest extinguisher of pretenders and hypocrites; while all the other members of the critical camp moved to and fro like ordinary mortals. Still then, as now, though the writers in many cases were known, mistakes were often made in awarding to each his own. But the style of each soon became familiar to the readers in various nations, from Napoleon Buona-
parte to the lettered shoeblack. Jeffrey did not crush like Brougham—Brougham did not cut like

Jeffrey. Sidney Smith did not enter into philosophical disquisitions like Mackintosh — Mackintosh was not so critical and severe as Hallam; while none in the kingdom could treat physical questions like Playfair and Leslie.

Mr. Macaulay came later upon the stage. In the modest preface to the volumes of his collected essays, he states that the first article — that on Milton — was composed when he was fresh from college. To those unacquainted with college life and habits, it will, doubtless, appear that he must have been a student of long standing, deeply imbued with knowledge, and experienced in composition and reflection. Such are, undoubtedly, the results of a collegiate course properly passed in the regular departments of study; and the offshoots of his genius, which Mr. Macaulay had given to the public in his songs on the Wars of the League and the Armada, along with other prose articles through "Knight's Magazine," prove that his earlier efforts at fledging his intellectual wings were of a lofty order, and indicative of the high course he has since so successfully pursued.

Nor was the length of his college life anything uncommon, so long as his aim and determination were fitness for a high and ambitious career, and a full mastery over the elements of universal literature, if not of knowledge. The whole life of a man of literature, science, or philosophy, must be devoted to study and learning; and the few years of previous collegiate probation, through which he must necessarily pass, are required for simply training, tempering, and disciplining his mind for laborious after

life. He then does little more than break up, manure, and cultivate the ground, and sow the seeds for a future harvest of usefulness and gain, adorned, it may be, externally with flowers and verdure of great beauty and luxuriance. No young man, however distinguished as a wrangler, or covered with university honours, can emerge from its halls into active life a ripened and finished scholar. In proportion as he there forms habits of untiring industry, or of idleness or relaxation from study, he moulds the inner temple of his mind, and lays the foundation of his future eminence; but the interior temple, though formed, and rich with the buddings of future splendour, must afterwards be furnished—the imposing superstructure must afterwards be reared. Mr. Macaulay, therefore, was not late in throwing off university trammels, and starting upon his career of intellectual independence. And if he suppressed the soaring propensities of his ripening intellect, until elaborate study and immense reading enabled him at once to exhibit a richness and maturity of mind and a full mastery over language, he acted with wisdom and prudence. He knew that the leading reviews of our country were conducted by men of high talents and learning, and that to stand side by side with them, and be measured by their colossal standard, was an enviable elevation, capable only of being attained by a full and comprehensive cultivation of his powers. Hence his ambition rose as his energies quickened—at once he sprung forth an intellectual athlete, and has earned, before the tribunal of the public, a fame at once highly flattering and extensive.

Some have imagined that to criticise the greatest works of the greatest authors—to pass censures or applause upon faults or beauties, or enunciate doctrines tending either for the blessing or the bane of society, greater experience and maturity of mind were required than Mr. Macaulay could, at that time, possess. In some respects this may be correct; and it may be admitted that, for the production of articles which have since come from his pen, he was then inadequate. But does his article on Milton prove him unable to do anything like justice to the subject? Does the result of the trial bear out the hypothesis, that he was too young, too inexperienced and hasty in his judgments of men and events, to estimate either the true character of the poet or the stirring political events in which he acted so pre-eminent? Whatever there may be in that essay, according to the views of some, of political heresy, of startling paradox, or Polyphemus-like criticism, does it, in any part, exhibit the marks of the school-boy, or the errors of the flashy sciolist? It should be borne in mind that the whole tribe of early reviewers were young when they laid the broad foundations of their literary empire—Brougham himself being only twenty-three when he wrote his able essay on the “Balance of Power,” in the first volume, and twenty-four when he published his two portly volumes on the “Colonial Policy of Europe,”—a work of graver and weightier speculative study, and involving arguments of deeper interest and practical importance to individuals and nations than most questions discussed by Mr. Macaulay in his maturer years.

Every reader of Mr. Macaulay's productions will perceive the eminently historical bent of his mind, and the luxuriance of his fancy, which, dwelling upon the remote, the romantic, the effective, and the vast—the great actors in history, and the revolutions of nations—leads him to expatiate at large, time after time, on the revolutions in England—the revolutions of the Papacy and the wars of ambition and conquest in the sultry regions of Hindostan. In thus drawing an historical picture and filling his canvas, as it were, with the great men of the age selected, and placing each in his appropriate sphere where he is seen to advantage, he has but few competitors. To effect this point we almost imagine that, in his first critical article, Milton was merely brought forth as introductory to a review of the great changes then convulsing society; and that when he leaves his fragmentary antithetical criticism on Milton, the poet—as he stood and acted for his country and for future ages among the crowds of Puritans and Cavaliers—Presbyterians and Quakers—Fifth Monarchy men and Muggletonians—and enters upon the public career of Milton, the politician, as influenced by the opposing creeds and opinions which all these sects and parties brought into play, we perceive a marked change in his manner—more animation in his style, and a high degree of abruptness in his sweeping decisions on characters and events.

A regard for truth is perfectly consistent with a love of paradox—one of the most distinguishing characteristics of Mr. Macaulay. Such a predilection is also often extremely characteristic of parlia-

mentary orators and special pleaders, or obscure oblivious poets; but paradoxical straining is exceedingly out of place in the lucubrations of a truth-seeking philosopher. Mr. Macaulay, however, does not profess to be a philosopher; and the journal to which his essays were contributed had often been brimful of paradoxical matter before he was engaged upon it, so that he only augmented the fire without, in any degree, changing the modes of attack or defence. Throughout all his writings, it is plain that he loves to startle and surprise—to charge his remarks, his sentiments, and theories with electrical matter, to produce smart intellectual shocks and vivid impressions. His great aim is the production of *effect*—the creation of sensations in the literary world, and he often accomplishes his purpose. A stunning shock is often of more importance to him than a grave argument. In his view—and so far as he seems inclined to follow it—it disposes of the argument at once. The understanding of the reader is, for the moment, paralysed—thrown off its guard, and must recover its balance before attempting calmly to consider the point at issue, while he is rapidly borne away by the stream of words, before he has time to collect himself, into the vortex of some other point of argument. Essentially dogmatic in his style and manner of argumentation, he yet, by his half-persuasive, half-commanding tone, drags the reader along his lines and through his labyrinths. At once he charms them by the dashing brilliance of his style, and the rhetorical flowers culled, often profusely, from various regions of nature and art, and so dexterously, and often poetically,

interwoven into the very texture of the style, as to seem part and parcel of the argument — by the sudden and unexpected metaphors, which often, in the middle of a grave argument, like a sudden flash of light upon a dark ground, illuminates the circle, and by the vivid contrasts which he draws of the opposing sides of any question under discussion.

When, however, the mind of the reader is, for a time, wearied with the uniform dazzling brilliancy of the author, and retires from his pages to reconsider the question under review, he will often find the positions assumed weak, though specious, and all the sounding artillery of his language, and his vivid illustration, brought forth to cover some practicable breach, to cloud some prominent point of attack. We by no means insinuate that Mr. Macaulay is deficient in literary honesty, or anxious from party or literary predilections to conceal or overturn points of momentous truth; but it seems clear that a love of disputation—a desire to show his dexterity at fence, has often plunged him into mazes, from which the most subtle use of his dialectical weapons could scarcely rescue him. He would find some difficulty, for instance, in proving to the satisfaction of professors of logic, such as the super-subtle Sir William Hamilton, that “a knowledge of the theory of logic has no tendency to make men good reasoners,” or prove satisfactorily how poetry flourishes best in a dark age. Like Hamlet, he makes many palpable hits with his foils, but he also sometimes parries the air, and makes opposing phantoms of his own to have the equivocal glory of conquering them.

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cised a greater command over language, or possessed a more riotous fancy than Mr. Macaulay. Yet great national questions involving the well-being and peace of the world, were, in all their practical bearings, better adapted for the weightier faculties of Burke or Mackintosh than for him. His mind belongs more to the past than the present or the future—to the historical than the speculative—to the poetic than the real—to the illustrative, than the creative and the logical.

Many may question the accuracy of the above remarks; still it is evident that Mr. Macaulay's mind is not of that strong, consecutive, condensing, practical cast, necessary for the calm discussion of grave philosophical questions, or deep schemes of diplomacy. That he has read extensively the literature of ancient and modern times,—that with the currents of history he is well acquainted, and possesses intimate knowledge of the chicane and shuffling of parties, is evident, but with all his great talents and acquisitions, his discursive and kindling fancy, his mind wants concentration and force in any particular direction. Of metaphysical acumen he seems to possess but little, and what acuteness in argument he does possess is often neutralized by his dogmatic rashness in jumping at conclusions, often at variance with the premises from which he deduces them. His subjects are generally such as require great breadth of surface; and a frequent change of actors and pageantry, and a succession of stirring events are necessary for a full exhibition of his powers. He, in all respects, evinces a thorough knowledge of whatever subject he takes in hand; and his inwoven illustrations,

though often too rich and copious, seldom fail to render his object or subject, more transparent to the auditor or reader. The rapidity with which he shifts his positions and his views,—drawing forth analogy after analogy, picture after picture,—shows to the most superficial reader the mastery of an imperial fancy; but also suggests to more penetrating critics, the opinion, that like Burke, he is deficient in abstract subtlety, and close nervous, logical argumentative power. He is no financier, no lover of figures, no political economist, no learned and practised mathematician, no mental philosopher, no acute instructive debater. He cannot, like Bacon, ascend to the vast and stoop to the minute. He would have made a bungling anatomist, a burlesque imitator of Archbishop Whately, or John Stuart Mill, on logic. Indeed, most of his mental habitudes may, in some measure, be inferred from the paradoxical remark already noticed, set elaborately forth in the essay on Lord Bacon, that “a knowledge of the theory of logic has no tendency to make men good reasoners.”

If the writings and speeches of Mr. Macaulay did not, on nearly all points, confirm the accuracy of the foregoing sentiments, the fact that he left Cambridge without taking his degrees because he abhorred and rejected close mathematical study, would go far to justify the opinions stated. No one will deny that the study of mathematics is an excellent mental discipline. According to Bacon it is the handmaid to natural philosophy; and most men will concede that it is invaluable, in union with logic, for arming the intellectual gladiator with the weapons of dialectical subtlety, by exercising which,

in the arena of debate, he may overthrow his antagonist. But as a wrangler Mr. Macaulay is deficient. As an orator he is not eminent in debate. He requires time and study to elaborate his senatorial exhibitions; and though he has been known to join in a sharp debate, and at the risk of failure, attack the sophisms of some ambitious member and attempt to extinguish his arguments with a fierce tempest of rhetorical declamation, he is seldom either convincingly acute in argument, pungent in sarcasm, or overwhelming with his whirlwind rush of words. His set, as distinguished from his extempore speeches, come but seldom, and only on great occasions, and they never fail to illuminate the principal points of the question. All his statements are clear, and his advocacy strenuous and imposing, but, like the bolts of the ancient Grecian, they smell of the oil, and bear manifold marks of careful study. From beginning to end his tone is pitched on the same key. The billows of thought seldom rise and fall as if ruffled and tossed by breezes, or inflamed by electric passion. There is ceaseless action and uniform elevation, and an earnest straining after effect, but nothing calculated to touch the feelings, or arouse the sympathies of his audience. As a whole, his exhibitions thus got up for the occasion are often splendid and imposing, rich and admirably arranged, but often losing in the very *effect* for which he pants, by his ardent straining to astonish and command.

Yet, if we take his essays and speeches as sole evidence, he is no mere mechanical artist, endeavouring, at the expense of truth, and for a mere party

triumph to throw a web of delusion around the minds of his audience. He has never been a candidate for mere mob applause. Though his feelings and his fancy do not gain the mastery over his judgment as was often the case with Burke in his later writings and speeches, his vehemence and apparent earnestness of manner lead us to think him perfectly sincere in all he advances upon any subject he treats, though the brilliant rhetorician intent on display is transparent through every disguise. While no speaker of the House, and no author of the age is more conscious, or, it may be, vain of his powers,—often superciliously so to his intellectual inferiors,—few have been more zealous in searching after and expounding enlarged and living principles of universal right and freedom. While he admires and almost worships vast intellect and genius, as displayed in a Bacon or a Milton, none seems to sympathize less with such immoralities as in the case of Bacon disfigure its splendour. Judge him by his own declarations and we shall find that despotic selfishness seldom has found a more severe antagonist—mere pretension not a sterner foe,—true greatness and excellence not a higher eulogist.

In drawing his historical pictures we imagine that his canvas is often too broad and the scene too crowded, amidst which the principal figure that should stand out in bold individuality upon the foreground is often lost, or eclipsed, by the outlines of the minor actors. True it is, his most brilliant essays are essentially sketches of stirring epochs of history, more than simple portraits of the characters engaged. Take for instance, the articles on Clive or Chatham,

Sir William Temple, or Warren Hastings, and we find instead of elaborately chiselled portraits or descriptive outlines of the men, dissolving views of distinguished parts they took in forming remarkable epochs of history; and are thus left to deduce from narrated events the true character of each and the estimation in which posterity should hold him. This indeed, is philosophy teaching by example. It comprehends much and suggests more; and to many, unable to pore through extensive piles of records, Mr. Macaulay's essays will open up fountains of knowledge in a condensed form, and whet the appetite for more extensive information regarding important events, the nature of which the essayist could do little more than indicate.

As compared with Mr. Macaulay, Lord Brougham, in his compressed historical "Sketches" of the "Statesmen of the reign of George III.," aims at, and is successful in drawing more finished portraits of the men he fixes on his canvas. Macaulay figures more ambitiously and sketches more widely,—Brougham fills up and delineates minute points more efficiently. Macaulay is more rapid and discursive, claiming extensive acquaintance with no particular science,—Brougham, equally imaginative, is more condensed, comprehensive and profound. Brougham, is an able mathematician,—Macaulay is an inferior and careless mathematical disciple. Brougham, from the more consecutive structure of his mind, is necessarily a masterly argumentator and logician,—Macaulay, in some degree, decries the science of logic altogether. Both are orators, but each has his own characteristics drawn out and so clearly de-

veloped that little danger exists of the harangues of the one being charged upon the other. Macaulay's speeches, in some degree, resemble his writings,—broad, diffuse, rapid, energetic, full of historical record and allusion, brilliant and sounding, but seldom profound,—Brougham's, whether studied or extempore, showing in his luminous statement of facts, and his able advocacy or reprobation of any given measure, an universal knowledge of all that is cognate to the subject, and combining amidst all his condensed and burning eloquence, those qualities and acquirements in which Mr. Macaulay is most deficient,—a mastery over the statistics of finance and commerce united to a thorough knowledge of practical statesmanship and administration of the law. Macaulay in all his productions, whether written or spoken, depends little upon pure reason or pure imagination for illustrating his subjects. Like lawyers he cites cases and precedents, and thus loves to display his acquirements by the lavish use of names, and fancifully sporting among the records of the past. Brougham is more of an intellectual gladiator, whose statement and advocacy of any case or question is most clear when relying most upon his own pure reason and genius for illustration and forcible coloring,—whose mental atmosphere is nothing clouded by his prodigious acquirements, but seems more bright and rarified by the reflection it casts upon the combined stores from various regions collected within it,—who, indeed, can cite cases, refer to precedents,—plunge deep into the histories and governments of all nations as in his "Political Philosophy,"—indite volumes of literary and scientific

matter as if his whole life had been devoted to the task, but who never, for the mere sake of displaying his acquirements or producing stage effect, cites a multitude of names, or brings forward a crowd of historical associations. In Mr. Macaulay we undoubtedly perceive an ornament of the literature of his country,—in Brougham, an intellectual Hercules, who, whether in law or literature, politics or philosophy, has impressed his genius deeply on his age, and whose stirring history, for the last forty years is inextricably interwoven with that of his country. Macaulay's critical and historical essays may, in all probability, from their lighter texture and popular style, be more generally read than those of Jeffrey and Brougham, Sir James Mackintosh, Sidney Smith and Mr. Hallam. But if they should now by their lighter form and in their collected volume attract more attention, after ages will hang over the essays of the elder contributors, sipping honeyed wisdom, learning and philosophy from their pages, and studying the art of criticism from their skilful dissection of books and their estimate of ancient and contemporary literature.

It has often been said, and is all but universally admitted, that a constant study of the law, united to an extensive practice at the bar, has naturally a cramping and narrowing influence upon the mind; that, keeping the phraseology apart, its professors deal more in subtle points than great principles—that philanthropists are seldom found in their ranks—that professional coldness seldom induces them to range through the domains of philosophy, the regions of poetry and romance, or to explore the intri-

cate labyrinths of the feelings and the heart ; and that the practice of pleading for known guilty clients — of endeavouring, at the risk of all that is sacred, to throw the cloak of innocence over the worst of criminals, and all for hire, has a tendency to blunt the moral perceptions, and petrify the glow of the nobler affections. Now, much of this, we are afraid, is true, though there are great and splendid exceptions. Few, however, would infer from Mr. Macaulay's writings, that he had studied for the bar ; yet such is the case, though he did not pursue its practice. Sketching the times and character of the Florentine Secretary, or criticising Southey's "Colloquies on Society," seemed more congenial to his aspiring mind. Had he ever practised at the bar, we imagine what Queen Elizabeth said of Bacon, that "he was not made for small things," and what Hazlitt said of Brougham, that he was "too heavy metal for petty cases," would in some respects be applicable to him. Like Burke or Sheridan, against Warren Hastings, or Brougham, in defending Queen Caroline, he might have shone resplendent when mighty principles were at stake, and wondering nations were lookers on. But it must be confessed, that his want of tact and readiness in reply, would, unless overcome by practice, have prevented his success at the bar, equally as much as his lofty and brilliant powers would have raised him above the great herd of its practitioners. He chose a more congenial path to immortality. When his name is mentioned, it will have, like so many wreaths associated around it, the reputation of the orator, the historian, the essayist, and the poet ;

and when so splendidly adorned, well may the additional wreath which the reputation of the lawyer would have added to its mingling hues be spared.

As a poet in his "Lays of Ancient Rome," and in his earlier productions, he, as might have been expected, is more fiery and energetic than polished and graceful—more like the rush of the torrent than the smooth but rapid stream—more like the caparisoned war-horse, panting for the shock of battle, than the graceful and fiery racer, panting for the course. The readers of his prose productions must be convinced that he possesses a lively and exuberant fancy; and if the complete identification of the poet with the scenes he describes, and the imaginary or traditionary beings he creates to fill them, be the work of a higher imagination, then Mr. Macaulay throughout the "Lays"—where we find no description, or the expression of no feeling, but what seems characteristic of Roman life and the age which he has reproduced from the womb of the past—has identified himself with the spirit of his subjects in all their bearings, and has thus produced, from the mint of a lofty imagination, gems of a brilliant lustre with an appropriate setting. In method and style he has imitated Scott's chivalrous creations more than the forms of any classical ages with which we have any familiarity. He has modernized, diffused, and adapted to our own taste what we may suppose in the original ballad—of which no remnants exist—was more suggestive than elaborately descriptive—what by a vivid image, concise appeal, or single touch of the bard, like a spell or incantation, was calculated to stimulate the imagination and inflame

the passions. But, though in the form and style there be nothing essentially Roman, there is in the fiery spirit, feeling, and sentiment, everything Roman throughout the "Lays." They are bold and sparkling outlines of half-fabulous events, which, in the far-backward abyss of time, and in the eternal city, upon whose brow the word blasphemy was yet to be written, shadow forth scenes and characters which, like the foundation of the city itself and the colossal empire, are half entombed in mystery. They stand forth in bold individuality, partaking of all the attributes of the author's mind. With his prose works, even should he write no more, let us hope that they will descend to a posterity which will not willingly let them die. All his writings, as a whole, and with all which critics may consider faults, prove him a man of high intellectual grasp and brilliant fancy, and of varied and extensive, though not profound acquirements,—though, if report be correct, we may look for a work which is to place him in the front rank of historians.* If from past political exhibitions we

* The foregoing paper was drawn up in 1846, previous to the appearance of Mr. Macaulay's "History of England," and hence before any elaborate criticisms on his works had appeared. The writer knows of no reason why the expressed opinions should be altered, as he not only thinks them, in the main, correct, but has been gratified in finding nearly all the criticisms which he has seen, setting forth similar views. The following passage, originally in the body of the paper, will show what opinions were entertained regarding the History then in progress, and whether the anticipations have been realised by the performance :

"From the historical essays on Sir William Temple, Lord Clive, Hampden, Lord Chatham, Ranke's History of the Popes,

may predict the future, we imagine that his liberality will never be extreme, nor so far removed from trimming and transparent expediency, as to induce his fellow-beings to consider him a patriot, who would

Hallam's Constitutional History, and Sir James Mackintosh's Fragment on the Revolution, we infer the nature of the elaborate History of the Revolution which Mr. Macaulay is reported to have in progress. All his copious and available erudition will be brought into play: his accuracy in the combination of scattered facts—his ingenuity in detecting analogies, and decomposing evidence to seize its strongest and most telling points, and the skill and seeming ease with which he deduces principles, and gains, apparently, just conclusions from the facts mapped out before him, combined with the rectitude of his moral nature, and his condemnation of much that partakes of tyranny or baseness of soul—all lead us to think that his history, when completed, will be a great acquisition to our literature. Besides the research which will be expended, rich adornments will be lavished; great rhetorical grace and beauty will charm the reader, while the springs of action will be traced, and the influence of events be followed through their all but invisible ramifications, as productive of more remote operations and events. If it be possible to write history on a principle and plan at once popular and philosophical, in which kings, courtiers, and statesmen will absorb only their due share of attention; and in which also the people shall be duly represented and sympathised with as intelligent agents, for whom ministers and kings exist and act—which in no history they have ever yet been—no writer of our age seems so able to accomplish it as Mr. Macaulay. In chronicling the Revolution, he will have his faults. We already know the drift of his political bias. And as chasteness of language and simplicity of diction should distinguish the historian, we imagine Mr. Macaulay will find a difficulty in repressing his fanciful illustrations, and be sometimes at a loss, from his exuberance of words, to select the most fitting for his purpose. But such defects spring from excellencies."

sacrifice anything for the welfare of his country or his race. But let us not be too harsh in our judgments. As he has hitherto been considered the true friend of justice and liberty all over the globe, let us hope that he may still be regarded as a great instrument in the hands of providence for promoting the intellectual, political, and moral improvement of his species.



ON MACAULAY'S ESTIMATE OF BACON'S PHILOSOPHY.

THOSE acquainted with the high literary, scientific, and philosophical reputation of the influential journal in which Mr. Macaulay's Essays originally appeared, would naturally argue, *à priori*, that narrow and superficial views of the questions he endeavours to discuss, would not characterise his contributions. True, popularity and profundity are seldom united, and are, perhaps, in most cases, like oil and water, immiscible. But still, enlarged and correct views of great questions may be so expressed and illustrated, as to lead the thinking portion of the working public to study them more closely, understand them more clearly, and appreciate the imparted knowledge more highly. Thus, we think the Essay on Lord Bacon's Life and Works, in point of illustrative vigour and reasoning power, the ablest in Mr. Macaulay's volumes. It is, perhaps, as popular as it is possible to make the subject; and if the author has not plunged so profoundly as some have done, he has so far sounded the depths of the great intellectual ocean of Bacon's mind, and traced out the effects of what has been gathered from its stores, as to impress them more deeply and effectually upon his readers, than if

less prodigal of his illustrations, and less popular in his language. Mr. Macaulay has evidently studied the works of the great father of inductive philosophy with care and effect; and has given a condensed but brilliant epitome of his life, his contemporaries, and the various circumstances influencing him in his great, glorious, and yet shameful career, with fidelity and fearlessness. He is not led away from what he conceives to be truth, by a blind or diseased admiration of his hero, to palliate or screen his faults, reason away his crimes, or cut down the angular and rugged projections of his character, as deduced from his conduct, into lines or figures of equal proportion, beauty, and grace.

Bacon and Newton, perhaps, more than any other eminent philosophers, have received the blind homage and indiscriminating eulogy of the crowd. Yet but few, comparatively few, of the public have read or studied their works, or possessed the necessary acquirements for their thorough understanding. Bacon's short but comprehensive Essays, and his Advancement of Learning, afterwards enlarged into the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, have hitherto been the only works which could reach the mass of the public, and which yet, by the condensation of thought and close cogency of expression, are oftener named than read—oftener praised than understood and applied. A greater number of people have read his translated works during the last forty years than during the hundred and eighty years previous. And in proportion as they have been read and understood, and their maxims practically digested, has the character of his philosophy, as influencing the onward progress

of society and the development of mind, been felt and appreciated by myriads of our race, hitherto ignorant of the great testament he has left to the world at large. To understand his character aright, we must estimate the moral nature of his mind, the social, moral, and literary character of his age, and the nature of his privileges and opportunities for conferring a lustre upon the sublime and dignified philosophy of life and human progress in all succeeding ages of the world. To appreciate his comprehensive understanding aright, in its universal aspect, we must, we apprehend, possess a more thorough and comprehensive knowledge of his works than those—noble in themselves—so easily reached by the multitude can enable us to obtain. And if we further wish fully to understand the nature of those achievements wrought by his methods and principles of induction, more than his own actual discoveries, we must pass in review the history of philosophy in all ages of the world preceding his own, and contrast its effects and its tendencies in the progress and improvement of the human race, with the prodigious advancement made in every branch of knowledge, science, and art, since his laws of inquiry and rigid experimental analysis overthrew the baseless philosophy of dreams and sounding words. In short, Bacon is himself a colossal study. His works are not school-books. Containing inexhaustible mines of pure wisdom, they are adapted alike for the student and the philosopher.

Those philosophic systems, if systems they can be called, of the ancient schools, and the schools of more modern days, previous to the revival of letters,

the Reformation, and the appearance of Bacon, Mr. Macaulay exhibits with great force of illustration. From Socrates to Plato, from Plato to Seneca, from Seneca to Aquinas, and from Aquinas to Suarez and Bacon, he clearly shows that the sole *aim and actual results* of the miscalled philosophy, was revolution without advancement, endless logomachy, without collisions between truth and error, and the elision of corruscations of knowledge to irradiate the intellectual twilight. Hence, when Bacon, from his high elevation of pure and intellectual faith, gazed upon the dreary expanse of barren regions through which mankind had trodden for so many thousands of years, and comprehending in his capacious grasp the vast and the minute of the possible progress of human nature, he saw, as through the glass of prophetic vision, the high destinies for which man was created,—pointed out the road by which progress and greatness, and intellectual elevation could alone be obtained; and persuaded future generations never to rest satisfied with present attainments, but to push forward the car of improvement to the remotest regions and greatest heights where truth can penetrate, reason guide, and science force the way. The shock which the innovation of the creed of Luther gave to Europe and the Church of Rome, was not more alarming than the shock received by the vague enthusiasts of the schools from the universal adoption of the experimental process. The revolutions in both religion and science, followed each other in quick succession.

When superstition was undermined on its basis of scriptural ignorance, and the right of private

judgment and free inquiry in matters of religion and philosophy, was claimed for and exercised by the human mind, it was vain for the rulers of the Vatican and the disciples of Aquinas and Ockham to expect a much longer duration of their slavish reign. The collision between the powers of truth and error was necessary for a proper comprehension of the elements of both. Declaiming and writing against Rome with all their force and zeal, the Reformers, in separating from its dominion, threw off their allegiance to the schools. They declared, in effect, that to follow Aristotle was virtually to abjure Christ, and thus, by at once creating an anarchy in the regions of theology and philosophy, the powers so long connected with the corrupt systems of both, became unable harmlessly to withstand the shock. A healthier and more independent tone of thought began to pervade society. "The activity of the human mind was manifested in all directions, in the relations of men among themselves, in their relations with the public power, in the relationships of states, and in purely intellectual operations." * It felt its freedom and force, and, like a captive freed from a twilight dungeon, where he had been bound with chains of silk, began to look back and wonder at the slender cords which had hitherto bound it in fetters of iron. The empire of philosophy was thus agitated with intestine war; blows had been struck, and already the reign of the tottering system which had won the profound homage of ages seemed destined to speedy annihilation. Bacon then, as if cast up, like Crom-

* Guizot's History of Civilization, Lecture XII.

well or Napoleon, by the onward spirit of the age, to lead the movement, appeared upon the scene, and showed a front of determined hostility to scholastic logomachy and error, and a determination to conquer all opposition to progressive civilization. He did not, therefore, first commence the crusade against the dominion of the schools, but he took the leadership of systematically directing the movements of the human mind in a path imperfectly known, whence it might reach a higher and clearer summit of correct observation, and command a nobler prospect of philosophy and truth than it had hitherto done.

To forego at this period, when Bacon entered the arena, their hold of those ancient systems which had existed for so many ages—which had reigned predominant in colleges, enlivened the solitude of cloisters, limited the bounds of human inquiry and knowledge among the officiating priesthood and the great and learned, as well as among the low and the ignorant—of those systems which had cramped the spirit of improvement and learning, which from the fall of the eastern empire had begun to revive in Italy, and which, amidst a universal twilight of mind, had kept the springs of all human freedom, in the hovel and upon the throne, frozen up in the Vatican and the delegated power of the priesthood—to forego those systems was as painful to the votaries of the scholastic philosophy as the loss of a hand or an eye. Stationary, or if in movement, only revolving like the eternal wheel of Ixion, upon a single pivot, surveying for ever the same scenes, filled with the same associations, wrangling upon the same dis-

puted and incomprehensible points—they knew not of progress, they dreamt not of intellectual locomotion. In their dreams and visions of the supremely good and beautiful—of the extent and nature of points of space into which thousands of angels could be circumscribed, they thought not of attainable bliss, or the improvement of their fellow-men. The *vulgar* arts and sciences, the diffusion of knowledge, and the progression of the human race, did not disturb their fantastic abstractions; such themes and objects they left far below to the herds of the grovelling masses, ignorant of the ecstasies of their world of dreams. They knew not that before they can rise high, they must plunge low; that to climb the delectable mountains of faith, they must descend low into the valley of humiliation; that to raise a towering but solid superstructure, they must build upon a foundation of enduring rock. They aimed at the unattainable, and disdained the useful. They attempted to scan the mysterious cycles of infinitude with the line and plummet of human reason. They disdained to stoop to the only means and method by which in reality they could elevate their thoughts, sublime their natures, render lasting benefits to the human race, and push forward the chariot of universal progress among the nations of the earth. Hence, when the method of Bacon began to influence inquiry, and experiment and demonstration began to pull down the rubbish of the schools, and rear, instead of sand-heaps, pillars of adamantine firmness and durability, the adherents of Aquinas and Duns Scotus looked askance in their fulness of sorrow, and, like Marius

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in mournful contemplation amidst the ruins of Carthage, still clung tenaciously to their errors and exploded systems. Long had they trodden through the barren wilderness, and "still around them frowned the dreary waste." They sought no pathway through its tangled borders into the promised land. Wandering in endless circles and inextricable mazes of their own creation, they barely skirted the province of reason and truth. But at last, amidst dire confusion, the enchanter appeared in their midst. The Pisgah of philosophy was seen, still afar off, but many gazed wistfully in the right direction, many went thither with willing feet, and could exclaim—

"Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last,
The barren wilderness he passed ;
Did on the very border stand
Of the bright and promised land ;
And from the top of his exalted wit,
Saw it himself, and showed us it."*

It might have been expected, in an essay on a subject so vast and interesting, that Mr. Macaulay, in expatiating on the incalculable advantages derived from the inductive philosophy would have naturally been led to present his readers with a clear and accurate analysis of the principles of induction. This, however, he has left us to gather from his discursive but comprehensive survey of its tendencies, and from the stupendous wonders already wrought by its means. In descanting at such great length, and with such exuberance of language and

* Cowley's Ode to the Royal Society.

eloquence, on the talismanic effects produced by a profound study of the book of nature, as applied to human progress, comfort and happiness, he clearly displays, as in a mirrored map, his own intellectual range, and the influence which the contemplation of the sublime, the grand, and the beautiful holds over his own imagination. The tendency to contrast and compare—to seize hold of pictures and analogies—is naturally strong in such minds as his; and in him it exercises a predominant mastery. In the comparative, or rather contrasted estimates which he draws of the system of Plato and the system of Bacon, he exemplifies, in the highest degree, this attractive feature of his genius. Without such contrasts and comparisons, clear and accurate conceptions of the Baconian process and objects can be drawn, and had been drawn, before Mr. Macaulay was born; but by this ingenious and picturesque mode of illustrating, his delineations become more vivid, and the impressions made upon his readers more distinct and durable. The brilliant grouping of objects so dissimilar, and the lights and shades so skilfully thrown into his portraiture, thus impart a clear distinctive outline and colouring to his views, such as is often imparted to the curious figures on a transparent vase by the light shining within it.

In carefully considering the subject, we cannot but think that the great aim of Bacon has, in many points, been underrated by Mr. Macaulay. He, along with other of Bacon's equivocal eulogists and envious detractors, argue as if his only aim was the "*supply of our vulgar wants.*" Such is Mr. Macaulay's language. Again, he says, "Two words

form the key of the Baconian doctrine—*utility* and *progress*.” But how far is utility connected with the physical, and how far with the ethical and general well-being of our race? Or is it possible to separate our physical from our moral and intellectual being so far as exactly to define the boundary where the one terminates and the other begins? Can any of his commentators seriously imagine that, because so much of the “*Novum Organum*” is taken up with physical observation and experiment, that Bacon was either abjuring the study of mind or neglecting the cultivation of the moral and intellectual man? Surely, with regard to such questions, Bacon’s own declarations should be considered sufficient; and if all his more scattered expressions and repetitions, all referring to his own great aim, the enlargement of the bounds of human empire, be not satisfactory, the “*De Augmentis*,” considered as a whole, should silence the most pugnacious caviller. Physical elevation and progress are undoubtedly great and necessary means towards a great end, but they were far from being the only aim and object of Bacon. And those who attempt, by false straining, to limit his objects within so narrow a boundary, not only unnecessarily underrate the mental perceptions of the man, but seem also to insinuate that he thought the scientific progress of the human race could be achieved without a corresponding advance of the intellect. Truth, wherever, or however ascertained, is useful, not only in a utilitarian, but in a far higher moral and intellectual sense. Bacon, therefore, did not himself seek knowledge, and lead the way to universal improvement, simply because

he imagined that through his inductive method a great and salutary but continuous impulse would be given to science and to human nature through all time, but also, because the insatiable cravings of his own mind, which saw or found nothing satisfactory or progressive in the empiricism of his own and all preceding ages, impelled him to the study of philosophy, and the framing of laws for the progress of mankind, during his leisure hours.

And, inasmuch as all science has sprung from an appetite for intellectual food, wholly apart from a consideration of the utilitarian objects to which it might be applied, we expect that science and discovery will still be pursued for the sake of their enlightening effects upon humanity, and the mental stimulus they impart, independent of their material usefulness. Newton took a pleasure in reading the stars; but had Newton no higher pleasure in doing so than in the mere calculation of the utility which astronomical discoveries might subserve? Geologists scratch the surface of the earth to trace the nature and depth of the belts of strata and the remains of the animals imbedded within it; but in doing so year after year, is there no superadded pleasure to that which merely flows from a knowledge of the additions which their discoveries will make to science? We masticate our food, but is there no pleasure attached to it apart from our knowledge of its utility in supporting and regenerating the body? We acquire health and vigour of body from the exercise of our limbs, and the mind acquires energy and elastic temper from the disciplined play of the faculties; but in all these

habits and yearnings, we seek enjoyment rather than the supply of our physical "vulgar wants." *Utility*, therefore, though the result, is not the sole result of philosophic research, nor the only aim or motive which induced Bacon and succeeding philosophers to press forward in a career of discovery. There is the superadded pleasure flowing from a consciousness of *mental* as well as *physical* progression, thrown over all, even as the pleasures of a peaceful conscience flow from the performance of a righteous action, though peace of conscience was not the result originally sought for by the performance of the action.*

* On this subject, Mr. Hallam remarks—"The two leading principles that distinguish it throughout all its parts, are justly denominated (by Macaulay) *utility and progress*. To do good to mankind, and do more and more good, are the ethics of its inductive method. We only regret that the ingenious author of his article has been *hurried* sometimes into the low and contracted view of the deceitful word *utility*, which regards rather the enjoyments of physical convenience, than the general well-being of the individual and the species. If Bacon looked more frequently to the former, it was because so large a portion of his writings relates to physical observation and experiment. But it was far enough from his design to set up physics in any sort of opposition to ethics, much less in a superior light."—*Literature of Europe*, vol. ii., page 290.

The language of Mr. Hallam, when he speaks of Mr. Macaulay having "been hurried into the low and contracted view of the word *utility*," seems rather a grave charge against a presumed inductive philosopher, professedly investigating truth. Mr. Macaulay may apply it. Lord Chesterfield says, "A man of sense may be in haste, but will never be in a *hurry*," &c.

Mr. Macaulay labours hard to prove that Bacon was not the original discoverer of the inductive method; arguing that, as all human beings, from the child at its mother's breast, up to the full-grown man, since the beginning of the world, have acted on its principles, the praise so prodigally awarded to him as the inventor of the method, is a "*vulgar notion*," and altogether a mistake. The first man certainly knew that food satisfied hunger, and that water quenched thirst; and the first-born child of our original parents, by an animal instinct, knew, like many other sentient, unreasoning beings, that nourishment to satisfy its cravings was drawn from the parent's breast. The first tiller of the soil and sower of the seed, the first builders of a house, the first carpenters of a ship, and the first inventors of weapons of war and death, all, undoubtedly, in rude forms, acted upon the principles of induction, as well as the more finished architects and sculptors of Persepolis, Athens, and Rome, the ship-builders of Tyre, or the sabre-grinders of Damascus. But the question is, did they act *systematically* on the principles which, as applied since Bacon's time, have changed the condition of the world? If so, how was it that philosophy slumbered until Bacon, as if by an intellectual convulsion, awoke it? Did the first child at its mother's breast, when, according to Mr. Macaulay, acting on the inductive method, reason from the effect to the cause, and conclude, *à priori*, that the breast contained a nourishing liquid; and that, as it once contained it, so it would naturally continue to do? Was it acquainted with the constancy and uniformity of nature's sequences? Or is

not the instinct of any mere sentient animal on an equality with the instinct of the infant scarce dawning into intelligence? It is evident that he here elevates instinct into induction, or levels induction to animal instinct, an argument which might be carried to a ridiculous conclusion.

The whole argument, therefore, in combating Bacon's claims to the inductive method, is a piece of loose, superfluous declamation, serving no practical purpose. Induction is reason in action, making use of and educing knowledge, and, as such, is naturally inherent in human nature. And that which, from the creation of the first man, when he built his bower in Eden, has been the natural result of the human reason of our race, it required no Bacon to discover, and no Macaulay to tell us that Bacon never did discover it. He might as well raise an argument on the fact, that Bacon was not the first to discover the attributes of the human mind. But though Bacon was not, and could not possibly be, the discoverer of the inductive method, he did what no former philosopher had ever done.

Bacon appreciated and analyzed the principles of induction, differently than they ever had been analyzed, and laid down rules for their use which henceforth concentrated the human mind upon objects of possible discovery and progress. Bacon produced the key which opened the gates of the hitherto inextricable labyrinths of nature, and pointed the weary pilgrims of scholastic transcendentalism to a pathway whence they might reach the delicious fountains of simple truth. Bacon, by placing the line and plummet of truth and

reason into the hands of all succeeding philosophers, prepared the way for renewing the intellectual vision of millions, and laid the foundations of the enduring dynasty of mind upon the ruins of ignorance. Yet Bacon, in the sense in which some use the term, was not a philosopher. He reared no system of his own — no vast, nobly proportioned intellectual edifice, by that method which he so effectually pointed out to his followers; but he laid the foundations of all succeeding systems of true science and improvement. Instead of building a scientific system himself, the result of long and elaborate investigation, he promulgated to the world the conditions of all true systems which have since enlightened the world. He was not in himself a discoverer, but he pointed out and proclaimed the conditions of all true scientific discovery. Induction had been practised since creation, but he taught mankind the method scientifically, and on infallible principles. Hence, some, setting aside his meagre physical observations and experiments, consider him more an intellectual philosopher than a utilitarian reasoner—more a logician endeavouring to “enlarge the bounds of human empire,” by directing mankind inductively to the solution of all possible enigmas, the acquirement of all possible knowledge of truth, and the highest possible elevation of our race. He was the forerunner, who, in the intellectual wilderness of this world, came crying that a great revolution was at hand. According to Cowley, he was the great intellectual Moses, who, from the top of his Pisgah, pointed succeeding generations of wan-

derers in the desert to the promised land, blooming afar in the prophetic distance.

But Mr. Macaulay, going a stage further, denies the praise of originality to Bacon's analysis of the inductive method, and much of utility to the method itself, simply because Aristotle, above two thousand years ago, explained its uses, and shewed the impossibility of men making new discoveries by syllogistic reasoning and because we are acting on analytical principles every hour of our lives, and even in our dreams. The paradoxical argument which he endeavours to establish on this ground, and the end he is anxious to reach, at whatever cost, is, that a popular knowledge of the inductive method is not necessary for the better performance of operations upon its principles—that men use figures of speech with no more propriety when familiar with rhetoric, than when ignorant of its rules—that men reason no better when familiar with syllogisms, than when ignorant of their propositions—and that a thorough knowledge of the theory of logic has no tendency to make men good reasoners.

The conclusions thus reached, or at least asserted by this paradoxical rhetorician, seem so preposterous, and so utterly inconsistent with the encomiums he passes upon Bacon, and the results of his reformed philosophy, that the reader is startled and surprised. Few will believe that a thorough knowledge of the principles of induction has no tendency to make men better architects and engineers, and will not induce them to examine more

narrowly and more minutely the data on which they build their conclusions. Will it not help them to methodize their operations more systematically, whilst it sharpens the intellect and expands the understanding? Will not the physician, familiar with the inductive process, reason differently on the nature, principles, and operations of medicine, and proceed differently to work in attempting to eradicate disease, than the ignorant empiric who poisons or cures at random? Though, therefore, men had practised the inductive method before it was properly understood in all its practical bearings, the very knowledge and accurate analysis of its principles by Bacon, and all succeeding philosophers, has added an immense addition to human power. Look even to Mental Philosophy. The science of mind, subtle and intangible as it is, is now classified in the inductive list. The law of the association of ideas operated in every mind, and influenced emotion and action since the beginning of the world, in the same manner as now; yet that law, or, as more properly termed by Dr. Brown, the law of *suggestion*, since its discovery and exposition, has been hailed as the great master-key for simplifying many of the complexities of the human mind. The planets have revolved around the sun, and the whole planetary system round some central sun far remote, ever since their creation, but yet the discovery of the simple laws of their revolution was the most stupendous in the world, and led the way to all subsequent discoveries in astronomical science, which have simplified the complex riddle of the universe. Yet Newton, discarding all speculation, proceeded

upon strict inductive principles ; and, at one time, when proceeding upon an erroneous scale of measurement, threw aside his calculations because slightly inaccurate. Harvey, on the same principles, discovered the circulation of the blood ; and Boyle, following the same path, extracted the secrets from the bosom of his mother earth. The philosopher, therefore, whose aim is to arrive at truth, by seeking evidence and sifting it—by going through the processes of induction with care and patience—by testing all that is brought before him as minutely as the chemist when analysing the contents of the stomach of one who has perished by poison—and by multiplying and arranging the points of evidence, as he draws them from the crucible of truth and demonstrates their accuracy—acts very differently from the mere sciolist or empiric, who, ignorant of the precise rules and conditions of correct induction, accepts merely such evidence as comes spontaneously to hand, and troubles himself with nothing further, because incapable of properly applying it.* Yet the latter was the careless, sta-

* In speaking of Bacon, as compared with preceding philosophers, Dugald Stewart says :—" His great merit lay in concentrating their feeble and scattered lights ; fixing the attention of philosophers on the distinguishing characteristics of true and of false science, by a felicity of illustration peculiar to himself, seconded by a commanding power of bold and figurative eloquence. The method of investigation which he recommended had been previously followed in every instance in which any solid discovery had been made with respect to the laws of nature ; but had been followed *accidentally*, and without any regular de-

tionary mode of conducting philosophic research before the age of Bacon, and the former the rules of the philosopher, since he laid the foundation of the whole superstructure of science and universal progress. Ancient philosophy was Diogenes in his tub, cynically requesting Alexander to keep out of his sunshine. Modern philosophy is Galileo gazing through his tube—Newton walking among the stars—Franklin drawing lightning from the clouds—Watt, all but creating the steam-engine—and Cuvier, from a fragment of bone, rising to a knowledge of the structure and habits of the animal and the entire species.

The great object of Bacon being known, some may inquire, what degree of merit does Mr. Macaulay admit him to possess, in pursuing that object? In common with all who have ever clearly and impartially understood the matter, he candidly attributes all the improved advantages which mankind possess to Bacon and the inductive method—to Bacon, as the great stimulator of his followers; and to the inductive method, as the only means, or the road by which they were to be produced. But, inasmuch as the inductive method, according to his mode of reasoning, was not originally Bacon's, it follows that he only stimulated others to employ that method in search of truth, and thus armed

●sign; and it was reserved for him to reduce to rule and method what others had effected, either *fortuitously*, or from some momentary glimpse of the truth.”—*Account of the Life and Writings of Dr. Thomas Reid*, sect. ii.

them with a motive for pursuing that inductive process well, which all previous inquirers had done ill, and brought forth no fruit. After again — as if afraid that his opinions on the subject should be misunderstood — repeating that Bacon was neither the inventor of the inductive method — the first who analysed it, nor the first who shewed that, by it, truths long hidden could be discovered, he continues thus:—

“But he was the person who first turned the minds of speculative men, long occupied in verbal disputes, to the discovery of new and useful truths; and, by so doing, he at once gave to the inductive method an importance and dignity which had never before belonged to it. He was not the maker of that road; he was not the discoverer of that road; he was not the person who first surveyed and mapped that road. But he was the person who first called the public attention to an inexhaustible mine of wealth, which had been utterly neglected, and which was rendered accessible by that road alone. By doing so, he caused that road, which had been previously trodden only by peasants and higglers, to be frequented by a higher class of travellers.”—*Essays*, vol. ii.

Now, with all due deference to Mr. Macaulay, a knowledge of the road, as he figuratively terms the inductive method, and as he himself has shewn by his illustration of the child at its mother's breast, is inherent in human nature; and, hence, Bacon could neither be the maker nor the discoverer of it, and should suffer no depreciation on that account. But

nearly all authorities who have written upon the subject since Mr. Macaulay's Essay appeared, have, by a more rigorous reasoning than his own, overthrown his conclusions with regard to the road, as opposed to that of the elder schoolmen. If he was not the maker, nor the discoverer of the road, we contend that he first accurately surveyed and mapped it out, as well as turned the attention of travellers into it. That he did not prophetically prefigure, in detail, all the results that would flow from its adoption, cannot be charged as a flaw upon the system; nor, because, through the *deductive* or synthetic process, which he overlooked, truths and principles should be deduced, without special analysis, from principles and phenomena already ascertained, should our veneration for the great founder of practical induction be lessened. Plato sought after truth. Seneca studied physics, as well as morals. Neither of the Plinys were men of imbecile minds. Yet they, and hundreds of others as capable as they, failed in all their researches after a higher philosophy. Not only did they utterly mistake the object of all true philosophy, but they were ignorant of the proper method of reaching it, and adapting it to the general well-being of the species. And why? Because the road had never been discovered *in all its practical bearings*, nor mapped out with sufficient clearness and accuracy to induce travellers to use it. It has been ascertained that remains of temporary cities, or encampments, have been dug out in the wilds of North America, over which forests have waved for unknown ages. Mr. Macaulay's road, like the remnants of lost

civilization in America, if ever clearly understood, had been long lost to the view of travellers; and, when at last pointed out, was so overgrown with weeds and rubbish, that none but a pioneer, with the skill and fortitude of Bacon, could survey and map out its boundaries and its true direction—clear it of pitfalls and entanglements, and erect sign-posts, for all future travellers, who might openly traverse it in search of the inexhaustible mine of wealth which was “accessible by that road alone.” Nor—even could we admit that the road was well known—was it ever openly traversed by “higglers and peasants.” Had such dared to traverse it, other and higher classes of travellers would have traversed it also. But for centuries, a sign-board marked “caution,” issued from the Vatican, was erected at the entrance, threatening adventurous travellers with ecclesiastical thunder and the horrors of the Dominican Inquisition, if they dared to walk openly along the tangled paths beyond the boundaries marked out by the Church. Copernicus heard it. Galileo felt it. And he who now fills St. Peter’s Chair may wonder at such blindness and infatuation in his predecessors.

Again, we think Mr. Macaulay misunderstands Bacon, when he interprets him as meaning that the inductive method, when universally applied, would place all minds on a level. If such was Bacon’s meaning, he egregiously errs. But we deny it. He certainly illustrates his views, by comparing the inductive method to a ruler or a pair of compasses; but he by no means insinuates, because the dunce can draw with the ruler a straighter line, and with

the compasses a more correct circle, than the philosopher without such guides, that their minds are placed on a level. A dunce, by frequently observing the operations of a chemical process, may learn to perform it as accurately as Sir Humphrey Davy could have done ; or, by long endeavouring, he may attain considerably accuracy in the mechanical departments of watch-making ; but, so long as a thorough knowledge and perception of the principles of chemical analysis and mechanics be wanting, he can apply his knowledge to little but the process, or operation, immediately in hand. Here, therefore, the likeness ends, and we think Bacon's meaning went no further. Any further application of the maxim than this would lead to the inference that Bacon, when making it, or the parties applying it, and arguing upon it, were moonstruck. So far, therefore, as regards well-known practical operations, the inductive is, in many points, a levelling process. But a total levelling in the universe of mind can alone be made by some creative reconstruction of the whole system of human nature by an omnipotent hand. A man of great originality and force of genius must always stand conspicuous in mooted and discussing questions, where much subtlety and breadth of comprehension are necessary for their thorough mastery ; but in cases where no original design is necessary, but where the rules to be observed are plainly and simply inductive, and acquired by common application, like the making of a machine, the ignorant dunce, bred to the art, is on a level with the philosopher. Bacon's meaning, in

other words, we simply take to be this—that persons of dissimilar minds, habits and degrees of learning, when adhering to the same rules and experiments in the pursuit of objects exactly alike, and surrounded by like influences, will so far be brought to a level as, almost, invariably to arrive at similar results.

The mind of Bacon, all his critics agree in considering eminently imaginative; but yet his imagination was always under the control of his reason. "His wide-ranging intellect," says Sir James Mackintosh, "was illuminated by the brightest fancy that ever contented itself with the office of ministering to reason." "The poetical faculty," says Mr. Macaulay, "was strong in Bacon's mind; no imagination was ever so strong and so thoroughly subjugated." Yet with this strong poetical faculty—this vastitude of intellect, more discursive and comprehensive than that of any other then existing human being—an intellect which Sir James Mackintosh says, "always reaches the point of elevation whence the whole prospect is commanded, without rising to such a height as to lose a distinct perception of every part of it;" an intellect which, in its colossal proportions, seemed formed to master the whole world of knowledge, could time have served him for its acquisition, was yet, by its keen perceptions, able to stoop to examine the minutest objects, to leave no flaw, no fracture, no observable point in any attractive object undetected. "The glance," says Mr. Macaulay, "with which he surveyed the intellectual universe, resembled that which the arch-

angel, from the golden threshold of heaven, darted down into the new creation,—

“ ‘Round he surveyed, and well might where he stood,
So high above the circling canopy
Of night’s extended shade—from the eastern point
Of Libra, to the fleecy star which bears
Andromeda, far off Atlantic seas,
Beyond the horizon.’ ”

With an intellect ranging so wide and careering so high—with such a tendency to indulge in wit and metaphor, and a talent for discovering analogies apparently remote, it is worthy to remark how clear and condensed is his style—how subservient his imagery, to illustrate and not adorn—how closely packed, in a small compass, are all his weighty thoughts and aphorisms, and yet in unison with all these singular and often contrasting qualities, how lofty and commanding is his clear and potent eloquence!

We have little space for a consideration of Bacon’s moral character. Mr. Macaulay’s condemnation of his conduct seems too severe. And Lord Campbell, following in his track, and copying his account of the incidents of Bacon’s life, without emulating his eloquence, or entertaining the question of Bacon’s claims as a philosopher—draws up a summary of his character worthy of an Old Bailey declaimer. We would not attempt to palliate his weaknesses, or crimes if you will, or reason away the baseness of his ingratitude in the prosecution of Essex.

We must admit that when a man is tried and

condemned by the laws of his own age, upon clear, justifiable grounds, it is certain his conduct has been such as the manners and morals of society in that age acknowledged to be bad. We also admit that the lawgivers of that age, when they framed their legal code, or acknowledged the justice of previously existing laws, saw a moral necessity for the rigid observance of those laws. But, from all we can learn of that age—from the throne itself of the eccentric James to the woolsack, and from the woolsack to the lowest scribe of the lowest court, the acceptance of presents or bribes—call them which we may—to propitiate the Nemesis of the law, was notorious. Favourites and favouritism were all but omnipotent, in the filling-up of posts, the disposing of suits, the dubbing of knights and the creation of peers; and, hence, the tendencies to bribe and propitiate were almost as numerous as cases. Bacon accepted bribes. We know he did wrong, that he tarnished the seals, that he lowered the dignity of the woolsack, and fixed a stain upon his character lasting as time. But still the moral standard of the age was low; and though, when measuring him by existing laws, his contemporaries condemned his conduct, there was a moral necessity why it should be so. The case was too clear to be wholly overlooked; and for his judges to have discharged him, in the face of such overwhelming evidence and personal confession, would only have served to draw suspicion upon themselves and their master, the king. The knowledge also possessed by his judges that the sentence would, in most part, be remitted almost as soon as passed, proves, that

they looked with leniency and forgiveness upon the crime.

Mr. Macaulay defends Machiavelli from sweeping detraction, and produces, in mitigation of the charges, the oblique and corrupt standard of morality in vogue among the petty states of Italy. Cannot the same plea be admitted to palliate, in some degree, the guilt of Bacon?—at once,—

“The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind.”



POETRY AND INSANITY.

To say that any of the emotions of the human mind were superfluous, and, when actively employed, a drawback to the utilitarian progress of the world and the happiness of any of our race, would be tantamount to a charge against the Author of our being, and a libel upon human nature itself. The declaration, however, is frequently though indirectly made. Many men exist whose emotions seem as if wholly repressed or extinguished—in whom the imaginative faculty is wholly undeveloped—and whose views of humanity are, hence, altogether of a cold, plodding, unexcitable nature. Such consider all warmth of feeling and emotion as imbecile in the transactions the world—all impulse a barrier to ultimate success in life—and especially everything partaking of the poetic element, as the offspring of heated brains, more akin to the dwellers in Bedlam than to the combatants in the stern battle of life. They judge of everything by their own narrow and stunted standard, and in many respects would gladly reconstruct the nature of mankind and the laws of the world to harmonize with their own theories of humanity and their notions of productive utility; not perceiving in their ignorance, that the faculties

and endowments they affect to despise, are the *insignia* of a higher range of humanity, of a loftier standard of being, and that the greatest discoveries of all ages, ultimately, though at first condemned, of the greatest benefit to mankind, have been the products of ideal and abstract thought, brought by the force and pliancy of genius to bear upon the concerns of life and the progress of civilization. But, though still living amidst and daily reaping the fruits of the creations of genius, they can afford to scowl upon genius itself, even as the blaspheming atheist enjoys the innumerable sweets of life, basks in the sunshine, luxuriates amidst the flowers, the perfume, and the riches of the universe, and then turns ungratefully round, and denies the existence of their infinite Creator.

The most dull common-place minds are not always proof against enthusiasm, when any event occurs to claim their sympathies, to enlist the exertion of their influence, or draw forth their zeal; but though many consider such excess, bursting unexpectedly forth, a display of fancy or imagination, it is certain that it may exist and act without any very extraordinary display of the imaginative faculty. It may be called forth by a common utilitarian object—may exist in an uncommon degree respecting the construction of a palace of glass or an engine, or the speculations connected with a distant soil pregnant with gems and gold, and appear to some as if merging into a spirit of madness trembling upon the verge of reason; yet the objects which call it forth—the motives of action—are not imaginary, but real—not inbred, like the creations of poetry, but

outwardly existing—not subjective, like the questions of mental analysis, the dreams of Swedenborg or Boehmen—but objective, connected with the external world, palpable to the senses, and open to the survey of reason. It will thus be observed that enthusiasm, or extravagant excitement, is totally distinct from the elevated, the ethereal range of thought and feeling, which distinguish the dreams and emanations of the poet. The ideal poet, the abstract reasoner, and the discoverer of other worlds, dream, create, and pierce the heavens, like the architects of the first temple, in silence; the utilitarian projector, and artisan, and earth-worm, realise in matter the riches of their ethereal dreams and creations. Both dream, both may be enthusiastic, but they belong to different worlds, and the produce of their mental labour partakes of the characteristics of each.

The question, therefore, of the partial unsoundness or insanity of poetical minds, is totally distinct from that of the monomania of mere worldly enthusiasts. Every-day life proves the existence and active operation of the latter—has the existence and influence of the former ever been satisfactorily affirmed? With the exception of religious enthusiasm, which is in general more sectarian than evangelical, the objects of enthusiastic excitement are apart from the mind. In the case of the poet, the alleged insanity must exist before the mind can be abstracted from existing scenes and revel in a world of its own. The love of the world and the things of the world helps to create the enthusiast; the alleged insanity of the poet enables him to create his world. The ideal nature of the poet's conceptions, are,

hence, apparently more akin to insanity than the excitement of the utilitarian enthusiast. But inasmuch as all real insanity necessarily involves mental derangement, the question whether the poetic mind be insane, opens up a wide field of inquiry concerning the healthiness and the union of the powers necessarily employed in poetic creation and expression; and into this we must enter before we can fully understand the nature of the subject before us.

Concerning insanity itself, few words will suffice. Though Sir Walter Scott affirms that no poet will ever take a bold and successful flight, who does not for the time being forget himself, it is impossible for him at the same time to forget his individuality of being, or to leave his reason below while his imagination soars above. The perfection of reason consists in the well-balanced and healthy activity of the perception, memory, and imagination. When insanity occurs, the perceptive faculties are deranged; memory clouded and indistinct; the imagination wild and lawless in its workings, shrouds its objects in mists, dwells among shadows and nonentities, and, in reality creates worlds and beings, circumstances and conditions of its own. Sometimes the gloom is intense, as if the pall of night had for ever settled down upon the soul; but the gloom will at times be removed, and the patient blessed with lucid intervals, which, like a star shooting suddenly from an ebon sky, will be again swallowed by the darkness of the returning malady. Sometimes it will display itself in different lights. Less morose and gloomy, the patient may, like Ophelia, chaunt snatches of melodious song; like Lear, be torn with the gusts

and whirlwinds of disordered passions, and at other times impose not only upon strangers, but upon friends and keepers, with the very perfection of wit and cunning. The causes of this terrible affliction are as various as the symptoms it displays, and the depth and intensity of the eclipse under which it labours, and beneath which it proclaims to the world the infinite blessings of reason.

The dogma of the poet's insanity was uttered by Democritus above two thousand years ago. Shakspeare felicitously hit off the same opinion when he spoke of—

“The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.”

Dryden declares that—

“True wit and madness nearly are allied.”

And Mr. Macaulay, following in their wake, expresses himself to the effect, that true poetry can neither be written nor thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated without a certain unsoundness of mind. Let us inquire into the facts of the case.

Any formal inquiry into the nature of mind itself would here be out of place. Though no two human faces and minds were ever in all respects alike, yet, from the birth of time until now, all have, either more or less, been distinguished by the same or similar attributes,—been swayed by the same passions and desires, drawn and melted by love, repelled by hate, attracted by friendship, elevated by hope, corroded by remorse, and crushed by despair. In the midst of this sameness there is infinite variety.

In some, the firm and grasping intellect predominates over the fancy; in others the imagination is all-pervading, transforming and re-creating all anew from its own exhaustless treasury; whilst, in others, the sensualizing tendencies repress and colour the buds and blossoms of genius with their own distinctive hues, and check the spiritual fertility within. And such is the constitution of society, based upon, or springing from the nature of the human mind; and such the grandeur and beauty of the external universe, that endless provision adapted to every variety of mind and temperament exists to minister delight unto all. Whilst the philosopher finds infinite scope for speculation, invention, and discovery in the earth below, in the regions above, in the worlds within and around us—whilst the historian casts his eye over the chart of time, resuscitating the past, conjuring up the dead, and again realizing before the mind's eye, assisted by the glowing canvass, the ancient of days, of men, and of empires; whilst the commingling rush and chaos of the many cross-currents of society excite and jade the weary spirits engaged in the conflict; is it in accordance with the laws of mind, and hence, of human nature, that the vocation of the poet should remain in abeyance, and his song be left unsung? While no thought or emotion ever rose, or can rise up in the human mind or heart, without a correlative sphere or object whose foundations exist in nature to draw forth our aspirations and desires, can it be that the poetic faculty, so closely allied to music, and the most elevating of all human studies and pursuits, should be crushed beneath a load of utilitarianism,—

tabooed as the offspring of insanity, and opposed to all practical progress—itsself, meanwhile, the creator in the abstract of many of the greatest utilitarian projects which have astonished the world? Can it be that the infinite Creator has so badly balanced the human mind, as to leave its noblest faculty—imagination—without scope and provisions in its own world to exercise and supply its wants? If not, why should its wings be shortened, its flights confined to earth, and its glowing exercise and magnificent creations be set down as the offspring of partial insanity? Is it of no utility? Pleasure, says one great poet, is man's chief good; and if that pleasure be produced or enhanced by contemplating the storm-tossed ocean and the hurrying rack of clouds above it, the starry heavens, the flowery carpet of the earth, the limpid meandering rivulet, the face of beauty, the mild eye of warm and placid affection, the slumber of the innocent babe, and the look of fondness beaming in the mother's eye, mocking at once all utterance or expression;—then this gratifying and indescribable pleasure, though produced by associations other than those connected with a knowledge of the utility of the objects drawing thus forth our admiration and love, is of great utility in adding to the sum of human happiness. Our imagination is feasted, while our reason is gratified; and the pleasures we feel, and the thoughts suggested, are full of poetry, tending to elevate and refine the mind and etherealize the affections and passions. If the poet, therefore, in exercising his divine vocation, gives appropriate expression to the feelings and sentiments thus aroused, their perusal

by susceptible minds must yield deep and lasting pleasure; and hence it appears that if pleasure so high and exhilarating is thus imparted to poets themselves, and the lovers of poetry, one great plea for its cultivation is gained, and a proof of its utility established.

• It is of no utility—is it not? True enough, it has often been much lowered from its native dignity, and made the vehicle for conveying impure sentiments, and giving outward form and expression to impure images of the mind; while the pencil has aided the pen, and helped to rouse the slumbering passions and impel the more apathetic and careless in a career of vice. But has prose through novels and romances, and vicious comedies, been wholly free from this corruption? If, through satire, it has darted its sting, and through licentious effusions distilled moral poison, it has also pictured vice in its darkest deformity, and guilt in its horror and despair; it has painted virtue and goodness in their rainbow hues, and trumpeted their excellence, and hymned in loftiest hallelujahs the glories of Him who “sits enthroned on the riches of the universe.” If, when lighting up the flames of Troy, and singing of the prowess of Achilles, it has consecrated war, and seemed to make bloodshed a virtue, it has also sung the glories of peace and the conquest of Redemption. As the scourge of vice and the promoter of virtue, when rightly used, it yields pleasure to all susceptible of its beauties, and through all time has been an essential element in the progress of human civilization.

It is of no utility.—Is it not? Yet Bacon, from

his high elevation, declares that poetry is allied to reason and logic; that, to use his own words, it is "subservient to the imagination as logic is to the understanding;" and its office "is no other than to apply and commend the dictates of reason to the imagination, for the better moving the appetite and the will." Sir Philip Sydney argues that true poetry tends to impress the mind and strengthen the memory, by the citation of proper examples, beautifully displayed; and did not our Saviour himself impress his great doctrines more clearly and permanently upon the minds of his followers by simple parables? Often has it moulded the minds of individuals and nations, and marked eras in the history of human progress. What elevated and refined the Grecian mind in its career of greatest splendour and improvement, more than the noble effusions of the orator, the poet, and the kindred poetry-inchiselled art of a Phidias? What degree of influence has not the poems of Burns held over the peasant—nay, over the universal mind of Scotland? Yet, in opposition to millions upon millions of our race, from Homer to Shakspeare, from Shakspeare to Milton, and downwards to Scott, Byron, and Campbell, those who have thus applied their minds to its study, have been considered by our sage utilitarians as having lavished their intellectual resources and their time in pursuit of contemptible objects. Such forget that various minds require various employments—that if all minds were bent on pursuit of pleasure or employment in one and the same path—no results of any beneficial nature could be produced; and that, in fact, such an universal rush in one direction

would be a complete contravention of the wise designs of providence.

Certainly it is the great object of true poetry to elevate, to refine, and etherealise the affections and passions of our race, and this can only be done by raising them from the earth, by robbing them, in part at least, of their utilitarian affinities and motives, inducing them to forget their sorrows, and placing them, as it were, for the time being, in a world of greater happiness, and causing the sympathies and the silent music of the soul to gush forth in harmony with still higher and nobler strains. But is it necessary for this that the mind of the poet should be insane? He, it is true, drops the outward show and drapery of formal reason, but does he also forego the attributes of reason, and cease to be a man because he is a poet? While he sweeps the strings of his harp, and enchains the hearts of nations as if with the spell of enchantment, his vivid imagination towers triumphant, emitting transcendent flashes of celestial light, and apparently instinct, with supernatural power; but because the imagination, bequeathed so richly to the few, reigns in its proper province, and asserts and displays its attributes and acts up to its high behests, the other faculties, meanwhile, being subordinate, does it follow that reason is dethroned—that the whole mind is unbalanced, and careering wildly without aim or method through the realms of fiction and romance? If so, it would appear that the faculties act singly and alone, each in some distinctly assigned province; that reason, which is an act of the whole mind, when pursuing a logical argument, solving a geometrical problem,

tracing the invisible lines of thought in metaphysical analysis, or some deep scheme of diplomacy, banished imagination from its province ; that memory, opening up its vast charnel-house and restoring the past and the "old familiar faces," also discarded the aid which imagination invariably lends it, and that perception—the eye of the mind, the combination of all the faculties—centred and piercing with intuitive sagacity into the past and future, into causes and effects, into the human heart, the germs of character and the springs of action, was also a sort of independent faculty ruling in its own kingdom. But every reasoning being knows this to be false. No geometrical problem can be solved, no metaphysical analysis conducted, no logical argument concluded, or scheme of diplomacy effected without the aid and the play of all the faculties. In them all imagination is so far repressed as simply to illustrate, to adorn, and suggest ; still it is there, not with lustre dimmed, but in all its native strength and brilliancy, abiding its time for exhibiting in full play its more ethereal attributes. And when the poet, raised by its wings, soars in the empyreal, reason guides its flights, represses its fervour, and subdues its extravagances,—whilst memory and perception supply the materials which it fuses in its own crucible and reproduces in new and splendid creations. And thus all the faculties of the mind must be alive and active, each acting in its own province, yet all concentrated together and acting in harmony, before the vilified, the unutilitarian world of the insane, the moonstruck poet can possibly be created.

But the world perceives not this. According to

the vulgar apprehension the merchant and tradesman are steady and sedate, their object is known and they are no dreamers ;—the politician and statesman have palpable objects in view ;—the historian and biographer have little need of imagination and seldom use it, their object is the narrative of facts ;—the philosopher has an actual world to work upon, he needs it not either to decompose particles of matter, or scratch the surface of the earth to ascertain its age, or the nature of its revolutions as recorded upon its rocks ;—the astronomer needs it not, for though his course is among the stars, he wings his way thither on the strength of mathematics, and that is no imaginative course of study ;—and the mere pleasure seeker, the epicurean and sensualist need it not, they grovel low and need no wings to fly. The province of imagination thus, according to them, belongs exclusively to the superstitious novelist and poet ; the latter especially, is the great dreamer,—he is moonstruck—he spurns the earth—he gives a false view of human nature, and throws a veil over creation—he rhapsodizes the outer universe, men and events, and often gives a false colouring to truth—he leads many minds captive in chains, and plays the tyrant over the emotions and passions of men.

But the argument goes a step further. If the poet be under the dominion of insanity, all susceptible readers whom he bears upon the pinions of his own imagination must, for the time being, be under a similar influence or eclipse. When the poet gives expression to his conceptions, the lightning he breathes is circled round by intelligent conductors,

who, glowing with the ethereal or impassioned heat, are more or less sensible of the fire and energy of the poet himself, and seem as if, for the time, inspired with the like emotion. And the reason is obvious, because poetry, to be appreciated aright must be felt. It is not reason, through the processes of which we can travel, without having our emotions awakened from their slumbers—it is not mere fancy with its “brush dipped in the hues of heaven,” which delights in comparing, arranging, and illustrating the offspring of the imagination, but it is the imagination itself which calls forth and fashions in its own womb the glowing visions of poetry, and casts them often carelessly forth. Hence it is that the mere earthworm, or the mere dull reasoner, whose feelings are seldom open to its impressions, casts it from him with contempt, alleging that as all true poets are insane so no person can follow them in their ideal visions without unhinging his mind for grappling with the stern realities of the world. But if this verdict of the great Rhadamanthus of pure reason be correct, how many minds, led by the great masters of the lyre from Homer down to our own day, have been partially insane, and never suspected their aberrations from reason! They have been delighted when under the spell of the poet, and their emotions rose and fell with his own concentrated energies, and they have returned again and again to the living page to revel amidst its beauties; but still though the reins of imagination were thrown loose upon its neck, they never dreamt but that reason still held its supre-

macy, and could allow full vent to their excited aspirations without endangering its own authority. It is thus a thing of ideal feeling, often of real emotion—not of demonstration. Attempt metaphysically to trace the illusion, if it be such, to its source—attempt by analysing to ascend the perennial fountains of thought and feeling, and the whole witchery is lost;—even as the moving majesty and beauty of the human frame is lost in the attempt of the physician to discover by dissection the mysterious principle of vitality.

Another point of the subject here presents itself. Supposing reason to be eclipsed by the shadows of insanity, we are naturally led to consider whether the minds of all poets be alike influenced, or whether *there are certain degrees of insanity adapted to poetical minds of every temperament and bent, and to every degree of imaginative fervour,—whether the same rigid divorcement from logical sequence and the natural course of thought and feeling be necessary for the successful composition of picturesque descriptive verse, as is required for the impassioned blending of our sympathies and emotions with the external universe and our fellow men, or for associating for a time or times with the mighty dead and the scenes of history, or for disporting in other worlds, amidst other beings, in supernal light and amidst infernal gloom. That there are actual degrees of insanity among the inmates of every asylum everybody knows; and if insanity must be considered the necessary condition of every genuine poet, it seems that the whole tribe of the “tuneful*

brotherhood" must in every age have been distinguished by varying degrees of its creative influence,—of

"The vision and the faculty divine;"

and that the depths to which they have plunged, and the heights to which they have soared, have been either greater or less in proportion as they have been thus endowed. Byron, deep, burning, and impassioned, may have possessed a greater degree of it than Moore with his cold icy glitter, distinguished more for fancy than imagination;—Shelley, wild, ethereal and plaintive, even when most deep and thrilling, may have had a larger measure of it than Wordsworth, even though at all times wrapt up in the poetic element,—whose life must thus have been one long delicious dream, calm, reflective but ecstatic, and changing in its movements as softly and gently as do the fleecy summer clouds imaged and trembling in his own deep mountain lakes;—and Campbell, elegant and graceful, sweet and tender, and yet fiery as the war-horse, may have been more richly endowed with it than Scott, in whose verse the ethereal attributes were not so deeply blended with the descriptive and the real. But were they insane? If genius the most piercing and brilliant—if talent the most comprehensive and grasping, employed in ministering to the delights and the instruction of the world and to coming generations, be the necessary marks of insanity, then they and all who have thrown their spiritual and intellectual riches, of all hues, over the world and the minds of men, have, without doubt or question, been insane.

The dark and fierce Dante,—that “lonely lion of a man” whose very features, it is said, seemed as if scathed with the flames of Malebolge, whither Virgil in vision conducted him,—might have in some degree been insane, could persecution have effected it;—but amidst the horrors of the “Inferno,” the middle regions of “Purgatory” and “Paradise,” he had one great object in view which he methodically carried out, and in a manner, one would think, at variance with insanity,—the impalement of his enemies and the enemies of his country, and the beatification of his own friends and the friends of freedom and of Italy. He, indeed, had other views, he aimed at writing a great poem in a new language, grafted gracefully, like a new and vigorous shoot upon the old, and in doing so he not only found some solace, and even exemption from his many woes—for he had learnt how hard it was to climb other people’s stairs, and how salt is the bread that is given in charity—but by placing the foes of himself, and of Florence and Italy, in the circles of hell, and their friends and patriots in the celestial regions, he proclaimed their villanies, their virtues, and his own wrongs to the world and immortality, and gave vent to his wrath against the factions which doomed him to exile and a wandering life. Tasso’s fervid genius threw him in the way of love, and the blind God—not poetry—made him reckless and imprudent, and for admiring the darkly pencilled eyebrows of an Italian princess, he was by his patron pronounced insane and thrown into confinement:—but did he become a poet because of his insanity? or was the constitutional melancholy which preyed upon his spirits ever after until his last

hour in the monastery of St. Onophrio, not forced upon him by the false charge of insanity, and the cruel imprisonment in consequence of the charge? Alas! that the powers of the world should be permitted thus to crush humanity in the dust, and place a curb upon the spirit of patriotism and of genius, of which, under such circumstances, men and the world were not worthy. Whoever heard of Shakspeare's mental aberrations, except when he exercised the quill, and when his lunacy, pregnant with such wonders, was expended upon paper? Milton's genius burst forth in more troublous times, when, amidst state convulsions, civil wars, the kings dethronement and violent death, he found other employment for his mighty pen, erudition and genius,—hard Titanic employment unfit for lesser men,—than what his muse afforded him. But was he more insane when in “Paradise Lost” he lifted the veil from the face of the abyss, and invited his own and coming generations to gaze upon the Archfiend stretched many a rood upon the molten flood, the dread meeting of Sin and Death at the gates of hell, or the descent of Uriel upon a sunbeam,—than he was when crushing Salmasius—when suggesting the best means to remove hirelings out of the church, or when arguing so gloriously in his “Areopagitica” for the freedom of the press? The fire burnt within him, and his style and utterances were fervid and majestic, like the intense furnace which cast them forth. • But if Dante and Tasso, Shakspeare and Milton were insane, and because of their insanity “exhausted worlds and then imagined new,” does it not appear as if the greater their insanity, the nearer they soared to heaven, and

became assimilated to angels? And who can lament over the insanity of such men? or who would lament if such were again to visit the earth? or if another Scott or Byron should start into being to worship nature and poetry—to devote himself wholly to its labour, give himself wholly up to its influence, and associate the phases of the every-day life of poor but immortal man, with all its lights and shadows?

Had this view of poetry proceeded from obscure and paradoxical poets and critics, or abstract thinkers, panting after and unable to gain applause or the goal of immortality, the wonder would have been less, though the fallacy of the dogma would have been no less glaring. All Mr. Macaulay's discriminating readers, and they are many, know well that he is frequently charged with paradoxical matter,—that though he sometimes makes palpable hits with his foils, he often parries the air, and is fully up to the trick of creating opposing phantoms of his own to have the equivocal glory of conquering them. In the case of the poets insanity, he doubles upon Shakspeare and Dryden. When the former spoke of "the poets eye in a fine frenzy rolling," and when the latter spoke of the close alliance between "true wit and madness," they simply meant to convey the impression, that the poet in the fervour of composition was lapped in an Elysium or world of his own, even as is the frenzied lunatic amidst his dreams and visions—but with this difference—that while the lunatic has not the helm of reason to guide his disordered thoughts and fancies, the poets reason, true to its vocation, guides imagination in its flights,—sees that all is in harmony with nature, and true in

all its presentiments of ideal truths and creations. But the critic makes the poets mind to be actually unsound, in reality partially insane, and the readers of the poet, if appreciating him aright and enjoying his beautiful creations, also afflicted with the same malady. As if the nearer the skies were our aspiration, the further from earth was our reason,—as if the higher and nobler our natures and more akin to the angels, the more near we are to the asylum; as if, in short, the exercise of a fertile imagination was incompatible with exalted and penetrating reason.

Thomas Campbell also, in his poem on the rainbow, enters into the spirit of the same doctrine, when he says,—

“ When science from Creations face,
Enchantments veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
To cold material laws !”

Is not this tantamount to saying that the enchantments of ignorance, previous to the dawn of knowledge, were preferable to the light of knowledge itself? that the visions of the human imagination, previous to the enlightenment of science regarding the phenomena of the universe, were more beautiful than are the actual laws of the universe now unveiled before us? and that,—carrying the argument to its legitimate results,—the untutored visions and speculations of the darkest minds were more elevated and noble than the wisdom of the omniscient mind as displayed through the laws and phenomena of his own creation? True it is, the imagination abhors fixed standards and limits, because it cannot within

the limits of the attainable and the ideal remain fixed itself. But when platform after platform of stars and constellations rise in an ascending scale above it, and succeeding stages still pierce deeper and deeper unto the still receding infinite, are no other regions left for its survey? no other worlds to people? where science with its line and plummet cannot disturb its reveries or upset its theories, or visions, of being. Here, however, it may be questioned whether science has actually robbed Creation of its beauty,—whether “cold material laws” be less beautiful than the lovely visions of unenlightened minds,—whether the blaze of comets, the mystic dance of worlds, inspired nobler visions in untutored minds when the Ptolemaic system of astronomy was entertained, and the sun was believed to sweep round our earth, and all the armies of the stars shone merely as lamps to light us to our grave,—than the now well known beautiful laws of the planetary system and of gravitation as demonstrated by science. To affirm it would be to again declare that confusion was more beautiful and attractive than order,—that creation as seen by the Chaldean as he watched the stars shooting influence down, was infinitely superior to the creation as enlarged by the telescope—that, in short, God’s world was inferior to man’s. In like manner the rainbow, in the eyes of such, has lost much of its beauty and significance,—is no longer visited by the footsteps of angels, no longer the midway station given,—

“For happy spirits to alight,
Betwixt the earth and heaven;”

but is simply recognised, as scriptures inform us, as a token of Gods promise to man, and as a something spanning the sky, seen when we turn our backs to the sun, which enables the philosopher to descant upon the laws of light and the brilliancy of the prismatic colors. But such reasoning is fallacious. Man does not imagine less because he may reason more,—his visions are no less brilliant though they may be nearer the truth, than many of a former age, because science and mechanism and all material arts are pushing forward the car of improvement. Infinitely more is required from the mental faculties of man: everything of him and about him is tested,—all his energies are brought into play,—he must think and act as well as feel,—there is no stand-still amidst the complicated movements of the many wheels of society and the discord of nations, and he must be progressive. His education is infinitely more practical than in former ages, and truth and reality have become the strangest of fictions and visions. Yet poetry, with its foundations deep in the soil of truth, exists in its vigour and sends forth beautiful shoots. Shakspeare lived in a more civilized and learned age than Homer, and yet Shakspeare is the greater poet. Milton lived in a more advanced age than Dante or Homer, yet Milton's poetic strain is more sublime than that of either.

There is much in the rough every-day contact and crush of the world, to draw our attention and enlist our cares and sympathies, but all cannot subdue or extinguish imagination, or,—supposing the poetic mind insane,—make insanity less prevalent. Huts, or caverns in the desert, or in the midst of

forests may be necessary for hermits, or for Oriental intellectualists, but such are not for poets wedded to humanity, and now, through higher knowledge realizing alone in the infinite, the elements of "the first good, first perfect and first fair." Still the poet does not rear up enduring piles of inductive philosophy, but his calling or vocation is akin to that of the philosopher. Both see the same skies, the same earth and ocean, the same one God through all, and build their varied superstructures upon the same ground of truth and nature. Though the one uses reason more in his investigations than imagination, and imagination be the principal faculty of the other, both must be well balanced and act in a healthy manner in each mind before the desired results can be produced—before the heavens can be scanned and measured with the line and plummet of reason, or the brilliant creation of the poet be brought forth from the glowing mint of imagination.

The noble but coherent, rhapsodies of the inspired prophets of old, dwelling amidst the haggard defiles of the wilderness, and beneath the open roof of the Syrian sky, would, but for the source of their emanation and the truthfulness of their utterances, seem more akin to insanity than any of the creations of mere profane bards or poets. As it is, their grandeur and sublimity, their pathos and solemnity, are not the results of mere poetic inspiration. New and piercing eyes were given them to sweep "adown the gulf of time," and witness the curse of heaven fall upon, as yet uncreated, kings and empires; and tongues of fire were given them to

utter the denunciations of Omnipotence against the enemies of his kingdom,—to comfort his church in the greatness of her straits, sing her lofty praises, and cry out in the midst of the wilderness to prepare her way for the conquest of the world. All this was for special purposes, and they were fitted and inspired by God for the great work. The meek Moses, the patient enduring Elijah, the wrapt and fervent Isaiah, the tearful Jeremiah, the praying Daniel, and the herdsman of Tekoa, all, whilst exercising the prophetic faculty, felt their own weakness and acknowledged the indwelling presence of God as prompting their infallible predictions concerning Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, the Macedonian and the Roman Empires, and giving them tongues of fire capable of uttering the great thoughts welling up within them from the fountain of inspiration.

Should we look from the versified productions of our bards, from formal professed poetry, and turn to much which is dressed in the sober garb and drapery of prose, the transition, in some instances, will not appear so remarkable as some might be led to expect. When it is remembered that verse is only, in the majority of cases, the mere mould or form of poetry, and that the great bulk of it, is, in reality, void of the inspiration, it will be seen that the essence is in the material itself, not in the mere form or mould into which it is cast,—even as pure gold in the lump possesses all its valuable qualities though not moulded into coin or jewels; and, hence, that much of the noble prose which distinguishes our literature, is pregnant with the very essence of poetry, but which, because not wearing

what many conceive the appropriate forms and drapery many readers cannot perceive. Thus rhyme, though sounding musically to the ear, is no more essential for the expression of true poetry, than music is essential for the expression of rhyme. The *Illiad* was not originally chanted in verse. And much of our noblest music—our magnificent oratorios, is not married to immortal verse, but to passages of scripture wearing the mould and some of the characteristics of prose. And though scripture descriptions, no less than the great doctrines embodied, tower pre-eminently above mere human composition, many passages could easily be culled from our prose literature containing more of the qualities of true poetry, than can be found in some volumes professedly poetical. Despite the metaphysical tendencies of Baxter's mind, what poetical beauties are scattered over many of his pages! What gems stud the majestic sentences of John Howe! The breathings of Jeremy Taylor how instinct with the very soul of poetry—which, whether *living* or *dying*, bears the reader to the skies! And what burning magnificence, equalled only by his own poetry irradiates the prose of Milton! He defends the freedom of the press, and amidst his conclusive arguments against censorship, poetry and prose, both conveying weighty truth, seem to struggle for the ascendancy. At the conclusion of the second book of "*Reformation in England*," he invokes the "*Tripersonal Godhead*," and his grandeur and copious sublimity surpass all ever penned except

Reference is here made to his *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.

that of divine inspiration itself. And stepping forward a century, need we do more than mention the name of Burke whose dazzling prose is rich with poetry, whose "excursions of genius are immense. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation and every walk of art." So said Robert Hall;—and who can read the published works of Hall himself without perceiving that with all his metaphysical acuteness, and his clear, deep, solid reasoning, his rich and lustrous imagination permeated all his sentences whether written or spoken with the glow and the fire of genius, and a spirit of the divinest and the loftiest poetry. The name of Thomas Chalmers need only be mentioned to kindle afresh in the minds of his readers, many of whom well remember his living form and voice, the brilliant, often the riotous imagination with which he illuminated and colored on every side whatever subject he brought before the eye and mind of the public, and which reflected both the hues and the spirit of poetry. Nor, so long as learning continues to be valued, greatness of heart and soul to be revered, and genius of the loftiest order—original and creative—to draw admiration, will the suggestive pages, teeming with eloquence and poetry, of Richard Winter Hamilton, sink into oblivion.

Hence if the poetic mind be insane, or, as Macaulay has it, "unsound," all our greatest prose writers, whose fertile imaginations were and are eminently conducive to their greatness, and whose conceptions simply want the mould of verse to class them in the poetical category, must, or should be

specified among those, "alike but oh, how different" who rave in bedlam. And should not their readers also, necessarily, if appreciating them aright, tainted with the same malady, be similarly classed and tabooed?

The books that any man reads will almost invariably, as well as the company he keeps, point out or indicate the nature of his mind. Persons of a prosaic turn of thought will seldom read imaginative works, yet most persons have read the Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe. And whoever drew and colored the greatest and divinest truths in the form of allegory like the tinker of Bedford, John Bunyan? and was he in his "den" accompanying Christian to the eternal city, of "unsound mind?" or have his millions of readers in all parts of the world risen from the perusal of his pages more "unsound" than before? or was a "certain unsoundness" necessary for a right appreciation of the whole? We read the great orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, and for the time being, conjure up the Athenian audience of the one, and the Roman audience of the other, but are we, because the magic glass of imagination recreates and kindles into new and glowing existence the actors in those great scenes of history, necessarily of "unsound mind?" We traverse the mounds by the Tigris and the Euphrates beneath which still repose many of the wonders of ancient Nineveh and Babylon,—we walk amidst the pillars of Thebes in the Egyptian desert, and stand in the shadow of the pyramids,—we view the ruins of Paestum and wander over the Athenian Acropolis, wander round the Coliseum and

stand upon the Palatine mount in the seven hilled city Rome, surrounded by a vast desert of gigantic marble ruins, and the vast associations which rise up and crowd the mind and seem almost for a time to check its energies, all partake of the poetical spirit,—but do we feel our minds less sound than formerly? We stand upon the graves of the mighty dead beneath the open sky, and strange fancies rise up within us as we contemplate the dust beneath our feet as perchance forming atoms of the once living, breathing body—the clay tenement of the mighty orator who swayed assemblies and nations with the breath of his eloquence, or of the poet who kindled with his lyre the fire and energy of millions; and we have pictured their forms and listened in rapture to their discourses and their songs, and again conjured up from past infinitude all the scenes and associations surrounding them in life,—and we have not felt as if lapsing into insanity.

But what can be said of the great themes of sacred truth, and the exhaustless range of subjects over which the learned divine has to expatiate? The greatest of themes for the poet, the mightiest of themes for the orator, the Bible—the treasury of divine truth, concentrates within itself the essence of all that is sublime in the universe. What poet can rise to its elevation? What orator comprehend its mighty truths, or plunge to its unfathomable depths? The creation of the world and of man—the fall from innocence—the deluge and the voice of the destroying waters—the parting of the Red Sea—the giving of the law upon Sinai amidst thunder and smoke—Joshua staying the sun and moon in their

orbits—the great scenes of the crucifixion and the resurrection—the unsealing of the “Book” in the Apocalypse, and the strange events that follow—death upon the pale horse—the turning the third part of the sea into blood—the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath—the conflagration of the world—the joys of heaven and the wailings of hell,—all, by their mysterious significance and majestic grandeur and suggestions are eminently poetical;—and surely it would be a libel upon human nature to affirm that the eloquent divines who have expounded, and who still continue to expound their mighty meanings, and impress their truths upon the hearts and consciences of thousands, are, because necessarily giving wing to their imaginations and indulging in poetical flights, of unsound minds.

It would appear that the dogma itself has arisen from the belief, or opinion, that, inasmuch as the world is real and not ideal, and man’s time is short, and the demands upon it incessant and imperative, he is only in his proper element, and in a sane state of mind, when pursuing some utilitarian object, or when conducting some logical argument or mathematical demonstration. But this would necessarily give but a very narrow view of the human mind, and seem to advocate, for the benefit of man himself, the total annihilation of the imaginative faculty, and circumscribe our internal perceptions to the same range as that of our outward vision. Then would our sweetest world—the world of hope and the future—be but dimly pictured before the mental eye,—the past, that guide post for and index of the future, remain but vaguely fixed in the memory divorced from

all its living associations, and man, in a sense, become an intellectual abstraction. But logic and mathematics, be it observed, involve a play of imagination as well as reason, a retiring of the mind within itself, and a severance from all that is concrete and tangible ; and few great reasoners and mathematicians have ever been known whose imaginative faculties have not been as rich and lively as their judgments have been profound. Look at Sir Isaac Newton and Robert Hall, for instance. Amidst his great discoveries—which the very greatness of his imagination enabled him to perform—the first was patient and humble as a child: the second proclaiming the triumphs of redemption, filled, amidst his proudest reasonings, with the fire of the seraph, proved that imagination was necessary to give fire to reason, and to assist in properly applying the truths of eternity to the hearts of his hearers, and for leading men upwards on the wings of faith to God. Imagination unnecessary ! Take it away, and the world thenceforth becomes a blank—man is robbed of one-half of his distinguishing faculty of reason—the earth becomes a joyless prison, whose walls mingle with the clouds, and any views of his ultimate escape from its deadening misery are only vague and misty,—he may simply know of an immortality, but he cannot project his mind over the walls of the material creation to scan its profounds, or picture the joys of heaven, or the gloom and woes of hell—the eye of faith is blind, the sun of the soul is eclipsed, his animalism is complete. Restore imagination again, and he finds that he lives for eternity—the sun shines, the breeze refreshes, the great wheels of the universe

revolve for him—he is not an abstraction, though but a unit in the sum of the intelligent creation,—high destinies are in store for him, and he finds that the great charm, the sweetener of existence is the imagination which; when healthy and active, pours around him all the witcheries and the poetry of life, vivified and embellished by faith and hope. He finds that though all insanity is distinguished by imaginative wandering, all imaginative wandering does not necessarily indicate insanity. He says, and may, like Byron, consider that the stars are the poetry of heaven, but he also finds poetry upon earth, not only among the flowers in the gardens and fields, but in his own household, though but poor and narrow in its range,—in the smile of his wife, in the eyes of his children, in their lisping accents, their wondering inquiries, their earliest prayers and their opening affections. They are, like himself, denizens of the earth on the journey to eternity, and he invests all connected with them and the future, in the drapery of true poetry, gushing warm and living from the heart and the imagination, which, if tinged with, or in any way partaking of insanity, is at the same time a bliss from which he for worlds would not be divorced. Many of the noblest minds which have adorned our nature, from St. Paul downwards, have appeared insane to the world, because the more insane world could not rise sufficiently high to comprehend them. The wonder is that men and authors filling high stations upon an elevated platform in the public eye, should, apparently, for the sake of uttering paradoxes, giving smart intellectual shocks and making vivid impressions, run the risk of lowering what fame they

may possess, by the enunciation of doctrines opposed to truth and reason. If they imagine that by drawing forth opposition to their views, their fame will be extended, they should remember that fame thus created can only rest upon an equivocal foundation and may soon fall into oblivion.

But did not the great critic himself evince considerable intellectual aberration in hazarding the expression respecting the unsoundness of poetical minds? And has he not since then given many additional reasons for questioning, according to his own doctrine, his own sanity, and the chief of them the production of a volume of goodly verse, in which the imaginative faculty travelling backwards to ancient Rome, disports amidst mists and shadows, proving that the measure of insanity distinguishing him has not been dealt out with a niggardly hand? After all it appears that the prose and verse of distinguished authors are characterized by similar attributes—that imagination in both acts a similar part, and that much professed poetry though measuring so many feet per line, and often tinselled over with profuse and glittering drapery, is no more ethereal than the prose which often contains the pure quintessence, though plain and homely in its forms; and that no diseased imagination, or unsound mind, can possibly command that mastery over the emotions, necessary, in any sustained poetical effort, for consistency and effect.

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POETRY AND CIVILIZATION.

It is an interesting question, whether poetry flourishes best in a dark age—whether imagination, the parent of true poetry, necessarily declines as civilization advances. Robert Hall, in one of his early essays, expressed this view of the matter:—Mr. Macaulay propounded it in his essay on Milton, in the “Edinburgh Review,” with great self-sufficiency and dogmatism; and a later critic, when reviewing Scott’s edition of Dryden, enlarges upon it more calmly and logically, and at greater length. They are all, we imagine, in some degree of error, and we shall here attempt, so far as our limits will allow, a vindication of our modern poets from the charge of degeneracy, brought against them and their more civilised ages as affecting their art, by the great sticklers for the universal supremacy of the ancients.

The modes and systems of tuition—the classical curriculum—all the associations of university education, impress and give a bias to the mind, which marks its course through after life. And students cannot, perhaps, be blamed because in their minor years they imbibed the seeds of prejudices, listened to the biassed instructions of their tutors, or followed the invariable fashion of the colleges in their

worship of the ancient, to the partial eclipse in their halls of modern classics. This, before their minds have reached maturity, cannot be a theme of wonder. Dead languages must be taught—translating must be practised—and where such fitting themes for study and exercise?—what more calculated to temper and discipline the mind of the student, and add ornament to the scientific acquirements of the accomplished scholar? But when the rage for antiquity is so great, the thirst for converse with the minds of past generations so excessive, and the impression that all true greatness can alone be found in their productions so decided and conspicuous, it is plain that the student views modern productions through the fogs of an almost incurable prejudice. No one can be blamed for admiring the beauties of the ancients, for with beauties they are replete. No one can be censured for making them the subjects of imitation and study, as their excellencies may be admired and studied, without their ignorant and revolting doctrines. But, should not the mind of the student remain unbiassed and impartial when judging the character and claims of contemporary literature? They are to blame who, wielding the critic's pen, constitute themselves the one-eyed censors and not the guardians of the press, who, by an almost general and indiscriminate censure of modern poetical productions, crop the tree of genius of some of its brightest buds and blossoms, and quench in night stars which might otherwise irradiate the universe of thought, and show the critic his own intellectual inferiority, and the fallacy of his oracular judgments and pompous announcements.

We cannot, and neither do we affirm that poets

of modern ages have received no meed of praise from the oracles of the press; but we do affirm that but few of them have received their just reward. Their genius may be great, their productions magnificent, their just claims to applause and world-wide fame undoubted, but—if we may believe the critics—they have come too late upon our globe—they have not the stamp of antiquity to draw down admiration, nor a doubtful identity to excite wonder and critical wrangling about the creation and birth of their intellectual progeny. The authors of our own age move amongst us, and are seen by us, and in their conversation, and through their actions, display their weakness as well as strength; and hence, however great and comprehensive may be their genius and talent, the very nearness of our frequent views and contact, diminish our estimate of that intellectual greatness which we imagine belongs to those who are viewed through the magnifying telescope of time. Milton himself doubted, two hundred years ago, whether he had not been born an age too late. But Milton was no egotist. He was proverbially composed and humble, and, like most truly great men, given to under-estimate his powers; and hence, might see, or think he saw, little in common between the creations of Homer and Virgil, and his own more sublime production.

“We think,” says Mr. Macaulay, “that as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines.” “We hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem, produced in a civilized age.” “The magic lantern acts best in a dark room; poetry effects its purpose best in a

dark age." Here we have the assertion in three different forms. The reasonings in support of this paradoxical theory are, upon the whole, plausible; but the accuracy of the whole question may be disputed. A theory of mind, to be correct in its foundations, must have universal application; and to this view of Mr. Macaulay's there are many exceptions; therefore, the presumption is, that it must be fallacious. Because poetry has run through many cycles, and its subjects been selected according as its authors followed the tastes and manners of their respective ages, if verging upon the light of civilization, the critic denounces it as essentially defective, or otherwise a great phenomenon, seemingly not perceiving that human nature has in all ages been the same, and that the mere shiftings of society, by altering the currents of public taste, produces simply a change in some of the forms and aspects of literature, without diminishing the fund of natural talent, or dimming human perceptions to the beauties of the material universe, or stifling the natural emotions of the heart. Each cycle or epoch has thus been productive of its own caste of subjects, which have run their destined lengths, and yielded at length to more attractive innovations. A heroic poem of twenty-four books, founded upon a half-fabulous event narrated, or hinted at, in ancient history, and wrought with the machinery of the Greek mythology, though possessing all the attractive splendour of Homer, could no more suit the taste of the present reading public, than could the scholastic philosophy of the middle ages, if revived in all its dialectical splendour, gain an ascendancy in our

colleges, and extinguish the inductive method of Bacon. It is the audience which helps to form the orator, and it is the taste of the public which thus helps to form the poet, and, in so far as he follows nature, makes the notes of his melody successful.

• The natural character of any people or country, the form and condition of its government, the nature of its laws, the prevailing religion or superstition of its people, and the nature and extent of ecclesiastical domination, naturally impresses the mind with a distinctive character, which is again transmitted to posterity through its literature. The poetic vein thus running through the creations of pastoral poets, tinging them with all the hues and beauties of the external universe, will, undoubtedly, surpass the productions of an artizan ignorant of such associations; whilst the artizan, in commemorating the nature of his art or calling, would eclipse the attempts of the herdsman, only conversant with the associations of external nature. The early superstitions of Greece, when her people, after wandering from the true God, found relief in unhalloed rites and sacrifices, were quite in keeping with the dark age when Homer, sightless, sung the wrath of Achilles and the downfall of Troy. And it may be—in those early ages when the legislation of infant monarchies was wielded by irresponsible factions, and the people were sunk in ignorance—that the imagination, more free from the restraints of reason and unshackled by the forms of more conventional communities, could revel more at random amidst its own creations;—that, untrammelled by temporary or long-established precedents, or critical

rules of composition, and without fear of being charged with the sins of the plagiarist, it could revel undisturbed through Elysian fields and the gloomy regions of Erebus—hurl mountains with the Gods and Titans, or wander with Orpheus through the regions of death in search of his Eurydice.

But, even though we should admit, that when the mind has fewer demonstrable facts, and probable speculations, to engage its reasoning faculties, greater scope is given to the imagination, it surely does not follow that a fervid imagination cannot exist and act amidst learning and civilization. Reason may be cultivated until the imagination is weakened. But so may imagination be indulged to the weakening of the reasoning faculties. Facts and arguments cannot blunt, but rather sharpen the perception; and admitting it true that imagination must be subdued, when pursuing a logical argument or solving a geometrical problem, the very dialectical and mathematical exercises give additional vigour to the mind, as well as present truths hitherto unknown to its view, instead of touching its fervid springs with the benumbing chill of a torpedo. And though it may be more confined than the mind of an ignorant heathen, as it traverses the more palpable regions of tangible and speculative existence, the musings appear only less pregnant with beauty and sublimity, because more within the bounds of known reality—less fitted than the heathen to startle with its flights, because more upon a level with the knowledge and comprehension of all—void of the crude vagaries and superstitions of the ancients, and so unfit to

minister to the vitiated appetites of the wonder-loving, and not hallowed by being borne down the stream of time, and, hence, undeserving of the veneration poured by the sage classic critics of the day upon the mouldering remains of all distant ages.

The fact is, the present generation is distinguished for its love of truth and investigation, and hence the critical dogma, that ignorance and superstition wing the imagination with greater freedom, whilst the knowledge of systematic moral truths and science, prostrates its energies wholly at the shrine of reason. What then? Is truth less strange than fiction? Is history less strange and striking than romance? Or, is science, with its manifold wonders and discoveries, less surprising than the wildest dreams of heathen imaginations? Is truth less adapted for poetry than fiction? Or, is a mind alive and active with a knowledge of truth and science less able, on that account, to grapple with the beauties and sublimities of the universe, than the more benighted and wondering heathen? Here the critic should show us more clearly than he has yet done, by mere assumption, how the minds of the present generation of mankind, endowed with the riches of science and the truths of philosophy, and thus comprehending more of the scale of creation, and better able than bygone ages to construct theories, are, by knowing more, less able to create, or produce a poem capable of standing the measurement of patent excellence by the long-established rules of Longinus and Aristotle. Because, through the eye of science, we have pierced

the recesses of nature and read the lights of the firmament, have we plunged into infinity that our imaginations are more cramped in their range? Is it not a fact, that the longings of the mind grow more intense in proportion as its appetite for each succeeding variety of intellectual food is gratified? It revels, unchecked, within its limited region of thought, and, from its inability to pierce the veil of futurity or traverse the regions of infinity, is more ambitious in its aims—more lofty in its flights; and even, through unquenchable ambition and speculative daring, striving to fathom the councils of the Ruler of the Universe. Vain is it, therefore, to assert that imagination is eclipsed by reason, or that a civilized age must necessarily be barren in sublime poetry; as if the tittle of learning we can boast had satisfied our minds, or “the vast, the unbounded prospect,” covered with clouds and darkness to the heathen,—had been made all clear before us, and we introduced to a boundless view of the real, and hence, according to the critic, unimaginative and unpoetical universe of being.

Truth is not all poetical, nor is all poetry literal truth. There is a vein of moral beauty, which has run through creation since it swept in harmony through space—a beauty reflected from the mind of the Eternal Creator, glowing through the universal frame, from an atom to a constellation—from a worm to an angel; a beauty which all have ever owned, which every conscience has inwardly admired—a beauty indestructible as Deity himself—and that is *Truth*; and the poet intent upon wearing the halo of true and living fame, whatever the

fiction he may invent, or the brilliance with which he may clothe it, must, like Shakspeare, remain true to living nature, from thence draw all his scenes and portraits, and then, like the roses of a celestial paradise, his creations may live for ever. He has regions of his own to tread, but always let him follow nature, the great teacher. Truth he will find in every ray of light; and poetry in every exalted thought and ennobling sentiment — in music, in painting and sculpture, as well as in language. The noblest poems the world ever saw contain the essence of the sublimest truths, infinitely surpassing the creations of Homer and Eschylus, without the mixture of one jot or tittle of superstition, but which are, nevertheless, so familiarised to our minds through the medium of Revelation, that we lose, in some degree, the impression of their majesty and grandeur. • But who will declare that those truths are, by being thus known, robbed of their inspired sublimity? or less fitted, through our knowledge, for foundations for noble poems? or that our minds, by such additional enlightenment, are rendered incapable of rising to Homeric heights of splendour? If so, then the telescope has robbed astronomy of its arousing sublimities, and we must believe the exploded Ptolemaic system more capable of exalting the imagination, than the infinitely enlarged view of its solar and starry glories, presented to human view through the avenues of later science. Comets and solar eclipses, in darker ages, carried terror and amazement, wherever they appeared; but is the ominous comet less sublime in its eccentric sweep, or the solar orb in its faded splendour, because

science has, in some degree, pointed out the nature and causes of the phenomena.

The causes of this predilection of our critics for all ancient productions, we have noticed as springing partly from educational bias and early associations. There are, however, other causes apart from those, which go far towards showing the origin of their prejudices. The association of ideas, or, as Dr. Brown terms it, the law of suggestion, is a wonderful thing, and operates upon the emotions, through the judgment, the imagination, and memory, with marvellous subtlety and power. In the matter of literary taste or bias, we apprehend, it exercises supreme sway over minds of every calibre, temperament and bent; and rules, without our ever suspecting it, the whole empire of our affections and passions.

Admitting, then, that our ideas of beauty and sublimity are inherent qualities or emotions of the mind, which existing objects and occurring events—the suggestions of memory and the feelings thence aroused—bring into active operation, let us apply more fully this law of association to the case of literary preference for the ancient over all modern classics.

When taste, as determined in its character by the nature of our predominant associations, is, in its minor points, if not in its essential principles as diversified as the minds of the intelligent beings influenced by its dictates, we cannot but expect a vast diversity of opinions in the public judgment when such questions as we are now considering are entertained and discussed. Still, if it could be

ascertained how many, upon such subjects, think for themselves, the number, we imagine, would be but few. When an oracle, conspicuous in the public eye for learning and ability, propounds his dogmas, the many believe and wonder or remain indifferent about the question.

Antiquity, long since merged into the abyss of infinity, presents before them an awful veil of darkness. Thebes, in its state—Babylon, in its pride—Athens, in its learning—Tyre, in its commercial greatness—and Rome, in its glory and magnificence, with their trains of monarchs, warriors, legislators, philosophers and poets, impress the minds of both the learned professor and the intelligent citizen with undefinable feelings of awe and veneration, which extend even to the literary relics handed down to our own age. Thus, the associations connected with them influence, in no mean degree, the nature of our decisions upon the literary merits of their authors; and hence, we apprehend, is one of the greatest causes of modern predilection for the works of heathen ages. All are viewed through the telescope of mythology or half-fabulous history. All impress the imagination. All awaken interest. The crumbling ruins—the towering pyramids—the mouldering inscription, sarcophagus and mummy—excite the mind, as well as the song of battles and the siege of cities. And the critic thus feeling the value of ancient literary remains enhanced by their far distant associations, carries forward his regard and veneration to the fragmentary literature itself, and enlarges the dimensions of its merits through the haze of time, whilst all of recent production

void of such alluring accompaniments, though often of transcendent merit, is cast, in a great measure, down the river of oblivion.

To illustrate this a little further we may observe that the great tract of time which has elapsed since Homer and Hesiod the first profane poets of antiquity flourished, is a space within which the whole, or nearly the whole, of the profane history of the world is circumscribed; and in looking back over that vast field, studded thick with events important to then existing nations and all posterity, the memory feels loaded with the long succession of scenes and associations, and almost sinks beneath the weight. When the chain which reaches downwards is traced back, link by link, to its fountain head; and while entertaining by its narrative of action, and instructing by the philosophy deducible from the action and the impelling motives, the facts recorded will always appear, as we range further back, more misty and questionable—more apt to weaken the belief from want of evidence, and hence, more liable to rouse the imagination of the reader and aid the pen of the historian by his own additional fancies. Thus our belief is not only shaken with regard to the accuracy of some portions of history, but we absolutely become sceptical whether some recorded events actually took place,—and events too, which are attractive in its pages, and even dazzle the minds of successive generations. Who now gives credit to all the wonders so imposingly stated by the garrulous Herodotus? and he too an historian who flourished, at least, five hundred years after Homer is supposed to have existed. Are all the events narrated in

Livy's pictured pages to be implicitly believed? The mists of age break our faith in their actual reality, whilst the mixture of mythology with real facts, so confounded together and interwoven, prevents us from separating the truth from the fable. Thus, the productions of the most ancient Greek and Roman authors, receive, through the mystery attached to their own existence and identity, a degree of sublimity, like great objects seen indistinctly through a magnifying mist, independently of the intrinsic excellence of the productions themselves. Could we trace them from the uncertain period of their birth to modern ages when they became the ornaments of European literature, we should wonder at the mystery of their preservation, even as much as at the existence, uncorrupted in their descent, amidst storm, and peril, and persecution, of the sacred oracles. But the wonder seems the greater when all concurring circumstances are considered. The very existence of Homer himself is mythical, the place of his nativity a mystery, and the existence of such a city as Troy unauthenticated. And whilst the Jews had great interest in preserving inviolate the oracles of God, because they contained the history of their favoured race and the tables of the law, the Greeks had no interest, save that of literary pride in preserving the productions of their oldest poets, so that their existence until now seems strange and unaccountable. And while thus no certainty can be clearly attained with regard to either the author, the subjects, the collection of the poems by Pisistratus, or the strange preservation of the jewels themselves, —we naturally set higher value upon them—are

partial even to their defects, and look upon them as venerable for their antiquity,—wonderful in their preservation amidst the rise and the wreck of nations,—mysterious in the accidents of their parentage and birth,—amusing and instructive by their mythological doctrines, and the truth and beauty of their allusions,—beautiful and sublime by their limpid clearness and majestic march—the terror of the Trojan wars and the frowning horrors of the infernal shades.

It appears clear, therefore, that a prejudice which they themselves perhaps, do not suspect, exists in the minds of classic scholars and students, against modern productions, created and fostered by some or all of the causes glanced at in the preceding remarks. It is certain that in proportion as Homer and Virgil are worshiped, the moderns must pay for the adulation. The immense mass, so indiscriminately cast upon the world, amidst the whirlpool of which, the excellent is mixed up with a goodly share of the fetid and insipid, may, in some degree, create a loathing in the minds of those who measure all by the standard of Longinus and the beauties of Homer. Thus in fostering prejudices they cast a shade over truth, and forget, while launching forth their dogmas against modern works and genius, how thinly the great poets of first-rate excellence are scattered over centuries; and that during the last six centuries, a greater number of poets have arisen as stars in our European literature, than ever arose in a similar length of time in the heathen world. We cannot forget that Dante existed—that Tasso reigned. And when we look upon the list of our own honoured

poets and remember from their bequeathed remains, the mighty minds which, even when allowing Homer and Virgil, Eschylus and Sophocles, all their honours rose upon pinions of equal, at times of surpassing power and brilliance, into regions of the loftiest thought. Shakspeare has sojourned in this world, and by his intellectual greatness, and the natural simplicity, strength and beauty of his thoughts and expressions, covered Eschylus and his successors with the shade of his brightness. Milton though living in troublous times, outsung, by surpassing sweetness, by loftier sternness and majesty, and sublime grandeur, all the poets of antiquity. And who shall deny the excellence of the firm knit, well compacted strength and lofty sweep of Dryden,—the vigorous, well sustained and tuneful harmony of Pope, and the original swell and massive compass of Thomson?

That Homer is the most natural and original of poets has been generally considered undeniable. We, however, demur to the justice of the criticism. But waiving this question partially aside, to what does the declaration of his originality amount but to this,—that he, so far as can be known, was the earliest of profane poets, and produced pictures at once brilliant and original, in both design and execution, and as regards men, manners, and things, and resembling the great exemplar from which he drew the likeness—Nature. And, when it is further affirmed that no nations of the world have ever produced poets comparable to him, and that those who approach nearest his elevation, have from him drawn all their ideas, imitated his plans, and followed his rules,—what is it but saying, in other words, that Homer

copied nature in its external course and magnificence, and that as men were all alike, and nature had but one universal aspect, but one correct view of it could be taken, and that thus, all other poets appear to have borrowed from him, whereas, they, as well as Homer, himself, may have transcribed from the open volume of nature? Nature, by no succeeding poet, could be pictured more natural and beautiful than it really exists. But mighty as was the genius of Homer, of Eschylus, of Lucretius and Virgil, who, while the dramas of Shakspeare, and "Paradise Lost" exist, can subscribe to the justice of that criticism, which places the Iliad at once upon the apex of the literary pyramid of all ages and nations.

That the Iliad possesses in wonderful combination all the requisite elements for making a lasting impression upon the world, has been amply proved by its universal precedence, and its yet immortal youth. Virgil, possessing most of the qualities of Homer, and building his great poem upon a broad foundation and following the rules of the Grecian, is destitute of a portion of the fire, while he possesses the tender and pathetic in greater proportion. Homer is more distinguished for lofty sublimity and strength; Virgil is, throughout more steady and uniformly magnificent. Homer, existing in an age of presumed literary infancy, was compelled to rely upon his own inherent strength, and gave unconfined scope to his clear and dazzling fancy; Virgil, existing in a age of philosophic refinement and luxury, and amidst the magnificence of an Augustan court, stands much in the same relation to Homer,

as Cicero to Demosthenes,—he had more philosophy—more models, and it may be, relied less upon nature to originate, inflame, and add wings to the sweep of his genius. Homer already, the free, the untrammelled, had laid all nature under contribution to heighten the charms of his pictures and diffuse wonder among those to whom he sung. What was deficient in Homer, Virgil supplied, whilst he may almost be said, even in Homer's element of the sublime, to stand in equal stature by his side and claim an equal crown.

Do we here, then, concede the point, that poetry flourishes best in a dark age, simply because we have said that Virgil had more acquired learning, and less native fire than Homer? No such thing. It lies with the theorists on the other side of the question to prove, that Virgil, had he lived in the same age with Homer, would have been more fiery and sublime.

We must allow, however, that the natural beauty and sublimity of any subject, or object, upon which the poet or orator may diffuse his charms, determines in a great degree, the extent to which his genius will soar in its delineation, and the reception it will receive from the world. Thus Homer soared as high into the regions of mythological fiction,—drew as clear, and perhaps, as true pictures of the horrors of war, and of then existing modes of life, as any succeeding poet; but his paintings, even when a less clearly defined outline of his subjects would have imparted a more sublime impression, are drawn in lines of light. Untaught by the revelation of after days, his pictures of deified existences,

which we are taught to believe spiritual, and hence incomprehensible by us, are, in the highest degree, gross, sensual, and material. What is Olympus as the throne of Deity? What are the thunders and lightnings of Jupiter and Juno, the horrors of Erebus, and the dire character of Pluto, when weighed in the balance with the overwhelming themes of "Paradise Lost?"

Should it here be affirmed that the subject of "Paradise Lost" is in itself, immeasurably great and sublime, and therefore, no proper subject of comparison with the theme of the Illiad,—then, in strict accordance with the critics doctrine, we may answer that the exuberant erudition of Milton reconciles the difference between them. If Milton's subjects be inherently more awful and sublime,—according to their own poetical theory, his learning is against his success,—whilst Homer, through his very presumed ignorance, possessed infinitely greater facilities for dressing his more earthly scenery in robes of equal beauty and sublimity.

When Mr. Macaulay says, that no poet ever had to contend with, or overcame greater obstacles than Milton, he, we imagine, undermines the pillars of his own theory. He clearly admits what he endeavours to disclaim, by allowing that the obstacles placed in the way of great poets by learning and civilization may be removed, or that the poet, despite their opposition, may be successful in his efforts. If in the case of Milton, the force of his genius, by breaking through the immense mass of his learning, or by irradiating and inflaming all, succeeded in the production of a great and sublime poem, surely there

is a possibility of equal genius doing so in the case of another. True, no second Shakspeare, nor Milton, has as yet appeared, but where is the impossibility that men of equal genius may arise? Nearly a thousand years rolled away after the death of Homer, before the Mantuan bard essayed to rival his Grecian master, and produced the second epic poem in the ancient world; thus dividing the heroic laurels solely between Greece and Rome. And who knows but from the very hotbed of civilization, spirits of equal daring and genius may arise to divide the dramatic empire with Shakspeare, and the epic sublime with Milton and Homer?

But, after all, what evidence have we to prove that the age of Homer was one of darkness and barbarism? The mythic and legendary chronicles of Greece previous to the year bc. 776, are wholly void of any substantial foundation on which to build an accurate theory of the true character of the Homeric age, or the wars of Troy. Gazing thus through the struggling twilight, pervading the dawn of more illustrious epochs in the history of that wonderful people, we must conjecture much which we cannot prove regarding those early ages. But the connecting links of circumstantial evidence may form a chain so strong as to turn mere conjecture into certainty; and, thus, we think, the Homeric poems contain within themselves sufficient evidence to prove that the age of their author, or authors, was an age of considerable civilization.

An age of heathen barbarism cannot surely be one in which the forms, or idioms, of a language are fixed, and engrafted by acknowledged symbols in the midst

of a whole people, and made subservient for the copious and flowing expression of a refined sentimentalism,—the elevated descriptions of the material universe, and the conflicts of opposing ~~arises~~, or the emphatic enunciation of dialogue between interlocutors of various descriptions, in the council, the household, and the camp. Nor can the poet who expresses his ~~creations~~ in such a language, have reached his elevated position among men, without some degree of refinement among the people to whom he sings being continually manifest. As the exponent of their feelings, he must certainly be in advance of the bulk of the people, but not so much as to lead to the conclusion, that he is refined and they are barbarous,—that he alone has risen in stature, like the Gods, and left mankind far below. He must know their habits, and think with them, and feel with them, before he can speak their language of universal passion,—breathe out their loves in words of tender fondness, or elevate, by strokes of skilful, but unpremeditated art, their devotions to the skies.

Yet, when Homer sung, the language of Greece was formed and polished so as to be the fitting instrument for expressing the noblest poetic inspirations in the loftiest style in which that language had then, or has since been capable. And no language has yet been refined so highly, and made the standard instrument of such flexible and varied expression without a corresponding advance of the people that use it, in the scale of civilization. Language, among every people, is formed by degrees, and can only be so established as to become the outward exponent of the whole people's mind, after long usage and uni-

versal adoption. Hence, before it can become rooted and fixed, some advance in civilization must be made. And if civilization be essential for only forming and arranging the language, as adapted to thought, how much more essential is it, and all its necessary adjuncts, for enabling the poet to rise to the height of his great argument, and to apply his art with that skill and dexterity necessary for complete success. The elements of true poetic success do not, therefore, as we perceive, exist in barbarism and intellectual darkness, but in advanced civilization, and amidst spreading knowledge. Were it otherwise, may we not ask, where are the poets of the American Indians, — the African tribes, — the Sandwich Islanders, or the Polynesian groups? How is it, if dark ages are most favourable for the growth of poetry, that none of those peoples in a state of ignorance, with which we come in contact, have yet displayed high poetic achievements, and rivalled Greece and Rome in intellectual fertility and splendour?

But mere incidental expressions in the Iliad and Odyssey, having reference to the arts and customs of life, and which seem to have run universally through the common language of the people, — the skill exhibited in delineating character, — the universal belief in fate or destiny, as influencing all actions and shaping all characters, and the very fact that the beginning of the Trojan war itself, arose from an act of heinous immorality, — all tend to prove that the age of Homer was not one of barbarian ignorance. Nor could the arts be wholly unknown; — on the contrary, their very chariots and weapons of war, — the

shield of Achilles, and its marvellous devices,—the construction of the wooden horse containing the warriors who first entered the walls of Troy, and the impregnable defences of the city itself, negative the conclusions of those who would make Homer the bard of a barbarous age. The infant colonies of Greece, we are certain, were not ignorant of the fame of Egyptian learning, Syrian riches, or Babylonian splendour, though we know not whether any intercourse took place between them. But whilst the nations of the east had reached their culminating point and were descending from their elevation, Greece had risen, and was still rising in the scale of refinement towards the dazzling climax of her after magnificence.

We are apt to judge erroneously from our present mount of vision, of the extent and character of the civilization of any former age. Comparing its features with our own advanced condition, we are apt to conceive all as dark which does not, in a great degree, rival our own transcendant light. It is difficult for us to conceive how ancient peoples achieved their architectural wonders, and rose to such eminence in the arts, without the facilities which we now possess for universal improvement. How poems, histories, and philosophy were written and circulated, previous to the discovery of paper and the invention of the printing press, seems a problem which we cannot fully comprehend, and on which all the known records of the world can throw no additional light to that which we already possess. The mythic age had its recorded wonders; and whatever positive truth is contained in poetic narra-

tive, or fable, is so artfully interwoven with fiction, as to form a web of truth and error, in which the two elements are inseparable by us. And even much of ancient history, after the commencement of chronological eras, is so void of anything like proof of the events recorded, that, though we read of actual personages and events, and can discriminate between what seems sober truth and exaggerated fiction, we are often at a loss to know the exact extent of each, and unable clearly to separate the fact from the interwoven mythus—the pure ore of truth from the accompanying legend or fable.

Though this be the case, however, in the more accredited portions of Grecian history, the authenticity of the narrative is, of course, much greater than of the previous untraceable ages. All the evidence which can be produced in favour of the Homeric age being one of civilization, is, as stated, contained within the poems, whilst the evidence which proves the refinement and splendour of the age of *Æschylus*, of *Euripides*, and *Sophocles*, is altogether independent of their works, and inwoven in the history of their country. The æsthetic and poetical faith with which we gaze through the mist of ages upon the Homeric poems, as the offspring of no mere wandering pagan, but of a highly cultivated mind, immortalizing, with fictitious embellishments, some incidents in the wars of his country—has little in common with the interest which we attach to the more recent productions of the Athenian dramatists. When *Æschylus* rose, and dragged before the world the proud and indomitable Titan of a past creation, unconsumed with the fierceness of his own internal

fire, chained to the Caucasian rock the vulture's prey, and the sport of the gods, Athens was near the climax of its refinement and the summit of its glory. Sophocles and Euripides, still more than Æschylus, enjoyed the refinements of philosophy, as personated and taught by Socrates, and afterwards enunciated by Plato; and yet, despite the highest cultivation which the age could boast, Æschylus raised the drama to its highest pitch of ancient excellence; and Euripides, "sad Electra's poet," seemed to stand on the turning point whence the literature of Greece began to descend from its meridian splendour; whilst the nation itself, declining in virtue and power, at length sunk in twilight darkness at the foot of an iron power, destined to grasp the world, and, in its turn, sink into decay and disastrous ruin.

We need scarcely do more than merely advert to the age of Virgil and Horace. Rome, indeed, borrowed from Greece—as what succeeding age or country has not?—But, in her greatest epic and lyric poets, Rome, according to the doctrine of the critic, can boast of twin intellectual prodigies—prodigies indeed, by a twofold right of title—by their own exalted genius and power, and by their having produced their poems in the days of Rome's highest intellectual refinement and civilization. If, therefore, Homer was a prodigy in the legendary age of Grecian civilization—which the critic declares to have been one of darkness—surely Virgil, with whom he must ever divide the empire of his fame, must be a greater prodigy still. All the alluring refinements of Roman society—the effeminating and debasing influences of an Augustan court, and active

intercourse with the giddy whirl of Rome's ever-buzzing population—were unable to cloud Virgil's transcendant imagination, or tame down its soaring wings to a level with the muse of Tibullus or Propertius. As the type or moulding of his own age, Virgil reflects its light and its features in his *Georgics* and his *Eneid*, as Homer has done his own age in his twin creations; and in the same degree as Dante and Tasso, our own Shakspeare and Milton, gives an emphatic disclaimer to the assertion, that all great poets have been the productions of barbarous ages.

Passing over the commencement of Rome's degeneracy, and its subsequent decline and fall, during the whole of which dreary period Ovid, and Lucan, and Juvenal the burning satirist, have been awarded the garland of immortality, we come to the dark or Gothic ages. Amidst the mental twilight which then enveloped the world, we should have expected, had such darkness been favourable for poetry, productions of the highest order of genius to enlighten the gloom; but yet, until the Provencal bards poured forth their original and glowing effusions, the muse was wrapt in slumber. The Crusades, like an electric shock, startled Europe, as from a trance, and stirred the depths of thought in the bosoms of millions. Men began to inquire; discoveries were made; literature began to revive; and the first poet of a mighty band, Dante, the original, the daring, and the sublime, arose, and gave expression to his thoughts, his feelings, and his hitherto unattempted creations, in a new, and what seemed at that age a barbarous language.

If it be said that the age of Dante, immediately following the Crusades, was one of darkness, it can only be so considered in a spiritual sense, as all nations during the despotic ascendancy of the Church of Rome, must be considered. Amidst the deluge of barbarism which swept over Europe after the fall of the Roman empire, and existed during the middle ages, Italy was, by a combination of circumstances, raised high in rank and influence above other states and kingdoms. When Dante brought forth his divine comedy, Florence and Milan, Pisa and Genoa, and other cities of North Italy, together with the republic of Venice, had reached a high state of refinement. Venetian galleys swept the Levant, exchanging commercial commodities. Florence supplied other nations with woollen cloths. Milan manufactured arms and armour. Banks for the circulation of money were established at Genoa. The Canary Isles were discovered, and gunpowder was invented and brought into use. Amidst this tide of prosperity Dante composed his immortal poem, and fixed the era of that new language, grafted like a graceful and beautiful creation, on the corruptions of the old. An exile from his native city, his beloved Florence, whose ambassador he had been, whose magisterial duties he had performed, whose benefactor he was, he felt his banishment most deeply, and expressed his allusions to his native city with an asperity as keen as was his hatred of the factions which had expelled him.

Following Dante, arose Petrarch and Boiardo in Italy, and Chaucer in England. Then, amidst many of lesser note, Ariosto and Tasso, two of the most

brilliant poets of any age, adorned a period of considerable civilization. The Reformation was advancing, and knowledge and refinement in letters, had, amidst civil commotions and national conflicts, spread more generally and sunk more deeply in the European mind, during the days of Tasso, the spread of the Jesuits, and the rivalry of Geneva and Rome. And, as if produced by repose, after the fierce struggles of the Reformation, the cause of science, literature, and extended freedom took deep root in England during the reigns of Elizabeth and James. It was, indeed, the first golden era of English literature, remarkable for its imposing grandeur and extent. The drama had commenced its brilliant career, and Elizabeth was its patron. Spenser, full of allegory and romance, was charming with his "Faery Queen." Bacon, with the line and plummet of truth, was exploding the vague philosophy of ages. Raleigh was attracting by his courtier's dash and his dreams of Eldorado. Drake was circumnavigating the globe, and the mighty Spanish Armada, equipped for the conquest of England, was hurried to destruction. A succession of events were quickly following each other, which cast around that age a halo, if not of pure glory, at least of interest and importance in the history of the nation.

The days of Milton, still advancing nearer our own age, were greatly different, and in some respects comparatively free. Amidst the collision between Charles and his subjects, the muse gave way to the more iron-tempered exercise of robust controversy. Imagination, in the prolific regions of fiction, had its wings laid prostrate, and only served to illustrate

speculation and truth; yet, immediately following that age, and amidst darkness and many troubles "Paradise Lost" was brought forth.

Supposing, according to the critic's doctrine, that Milton had, from his vast erudition, great obstacles to surmount, it must also be admitted that Shakspeare was not altogether without them. He may not have been a classic scholar, or so profoundly erudite as Bacon the philosopher, or Raleigh the courtier, but was he an ignorant man? Was he unacquainted with the mythic Homer?—or Virgil, the ornament of the Augustan court? Did he live in an uncivilized age? No such thing. Yet with all the giddiness, refinement, and civilization of that age, Shakspeare, the poet and dramatist, soars above all ancient, all modern competition. But, whilst his supremacy is admitted in point of universality, it cannot be denied that, compared with his brilliant and often unexpected flashes, the muse of Milton burns with a more steady, dignified, and intense blaze. If, in the creative and amusing, the thrilling in incident and passion, the attractive in beauty and grace, Shakspeare outrivals the stately magnificence of Milton, the latter has, on the other hand, concentrated all the powers of his mind, and all the stores of his erudition in one great work—a rival to the greatest productions of ancient and modern times. If Shakspeare has poured out his various soul, and created a number of intellectual monuments, unrivalled for their intrinsic excellencies, then Milton, out of the materials which he had been gathering for years, threw all his skill and vigour into one eternal pyramid. If Milton appears more colossal

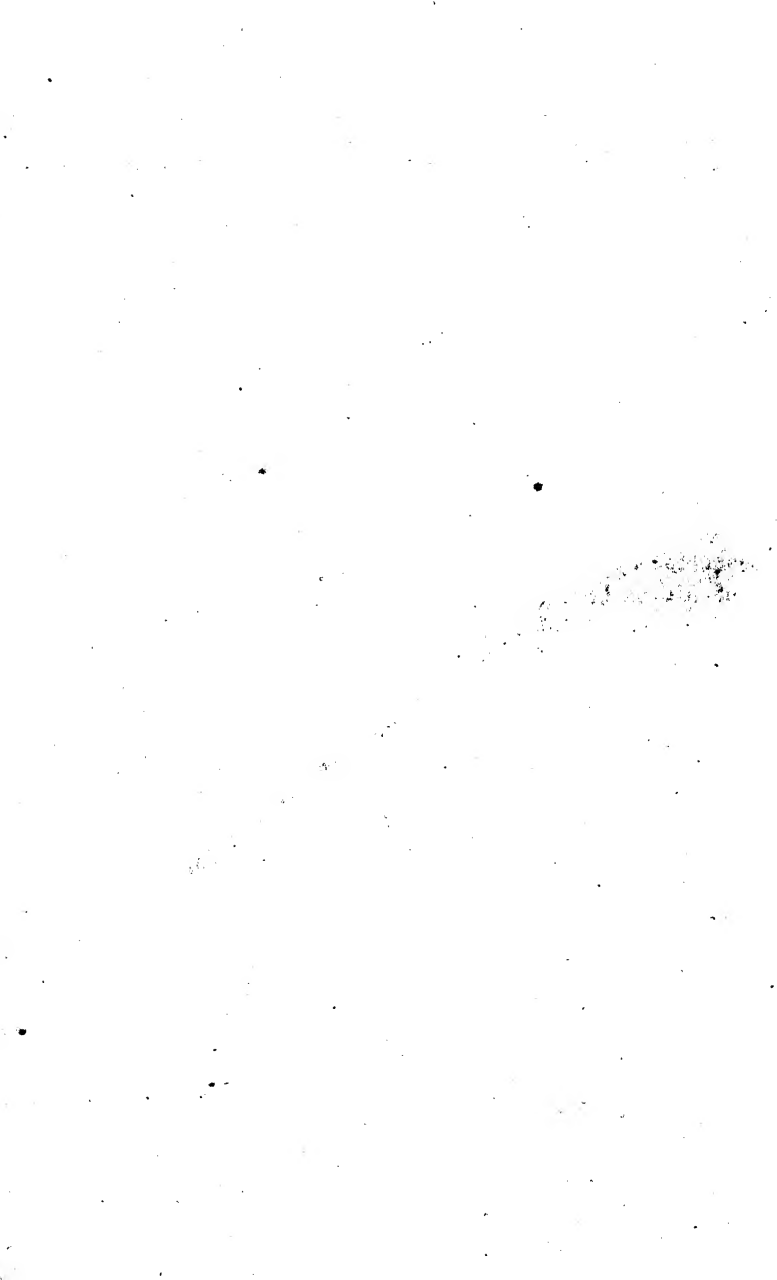
in his magnificence, and more suggestive in awakening the ideas of intense sublimity and omnific grandeur than Shakspeare, it is only because the latter has not converged all the lines of his scattered rays, and cast them forth in one blaze of light; as he, to all appearance, possessed in a greater degree than even Milton, all the requisite characteristics of genius for the epic style of writing. He only wanted that continuity of thought—that patience and elaboration necessary for the successful completion of so great a work. His dramas seem almost as if spontaneously thrown off in the impulse of the moment, so happily, despite his faults, has he made all his arrangements; amidst superabundant imagery, so clear and distinct are his similes, never overloading, yet ever profuse—never elaborate, yet always profound. In the natural and the affected, where affectation is essential to character,—in the stern and pathetic, the creative and real—the calm in Hamlet, and the impassioned in Lear—the beautiful and the sublime in sentiment and nature, he wanders, disports at will, never trammelled for want, yet never laborious in search. The whole world of thought was open to his intuitive glance. The whole world of nature was to him as the garden of the Hesperides, and he wantoned voluptuously amid its flowers and its streams, “stealing and giving odour.”

We imagine that it would here be superfluous further to enumerate a list of names, to prove that the highest poetry is no far fetched, sickly exotic in modern ages, and amidst spreading civilization. We still think that this iron, utilitarian age, has not extinguished the poetic faculty in human nature, nor

rendered the production of another Homer, Shakspeare, or Milton a thing impossible. At present there may be a pause in the progress of poetry, and few poems of a superlative character may have of late been brought forth; but a pause in its progress need not necessarily suggest the prophecy of its annihilation. We have faith in its re-invigoration, and its its yet resplendent triumphs—conscious that imagination can never be extinguished by reason, and certain that civilization can never be fatal to its full expansion and success.

Mr. Macaulay has made a curious remark which, in a great measure, explains the causes of literary predilection among the learned. In speaking of Dr. Johnson he says, "he had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles, as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine taster." Now, if we allow this to be the case with one literary character, there is every reason to think it may be the same with others. And it is, perhaps, therefore, as near the truth to say that the minds of Mr. Macaulay and his reviewing brethren are so warped with Greek and Roman literature, that they are no more fit justly to appreciate the excellencies of modern poetry than are "habitual drunkards to set up for wine tasters." They have erected their standard as set up in the universities, and it belongs to antiquity, and by its measurement they gauge all ancient beauties; but are lenient in marking their defects. Mr. Macaulay certainly gives Milton his due, and when sounding his praises condemns his own critical

standard. But, perhaps, Milton is only an exception to the rule. If so, where is Dante? Where are Shakspeare and Tasso—the erratic Ariosto—the charming Spenser, and our own Dryden, in whose single mind the critical and the poetical were so strongly blended as to overthrow, by the example, the assertion that the two were immiscible? Or, in coming down to our own age, let us ask where the beauties of Burns and Byron are entombed? For assuredly they are replete with splendours unsurpassed by any poet in any language. Or, where are the splendours of Scott's creations? For amidst all his carelessness and his quantity, and despite the rapidity of his execution, there are scenes of the utmost power and beauty profusely scattered which Homer never eclipsed; and amidst the busy scenes of war in which the soul of the poet seems inflamed, and the strings of his harp are swept with matchless power, the poetic grandeur of the Trojan war is equalled if not surpassed. But here it is unnecessary further to multiply instances to prove that the critics standard is one of false dimensions, supported by prejudice—reverenced by habit, and zealously watched and learnedly defended, lest the flames of modern genius should consume, or the assaults of antagonistic principles should overthrow it.



JOHN MILTON.

HIS AGE—HIS INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL
CHARACTER.

THE many learned essays, criticisms, lectures, and sketches, to which the writings and public character of Milton have given rise, might well preclude any unlearned adventurer from entering the ample field. But the great are not alone ambitious. Milton is a "household word," and his poems, however understood or appreciated, are household treasures. We love to contemplate the man in his youth; in his active manhood, amidst stirring and tumultuous events; and in his latter days, in blindness, under the ban of persecution, and dictating to his daughters his imperishable poems. Had he lived in other times, amidst high prosperity, courted by the great, and admired and loved by all, he had not so well fulfilled his mission. Though it is impossible to admire suffering as Milton suffered, or to admire blindness as Milton endured it, or to admire persecution as it howled around his path, yet it is impossible for us to dissociate from all these the monuments of genius he has left behind him. Had his vision been unobscured, "Paradise Lost" would not have been

what it is—if, indeed, it had ever been composed. From his external blindness he could more firmly concentrate his internal vision upon the dread realms of spiritual light and darkness spread out before him. To the revolutionary turbulence of his times we owe his noblest prose productions, and to his domestic losses and personal trials and afflictions many of his sweetest and most pathetic bursts of poetry. In his younger days, amidst civil broils and discord, society was making giant throes for freedom against worse than Papal tyranny and Jesuitical cunning; in his latter days tyranny and licentious looseness had again resumed the seat of power, and enthralled the nation in moral and political bondage.

But though Milton was old, and blind, and poor, it was some consolation for him to have lived for a time in comparative freedom, and to have laboured that the rights and liberties of the kingdom might be consolidated on a basis of right and truth, to set the example to other nations;—and to have lived contemporary with Cromwell, and Pym, and Hampden, the scourges of priestly despotism and oligarchical tyranny. And though he had now fallen upon evil days and evil tongues, and passed his remaining years in darkness and obscurity, he could calmly repose on a pure conscience and an anticipated world-wide fame; and though, like many others who have moulded the minds of their eras more thoroughly to the bent of freedom, and passed unrewarded, or met obloquy and reproach for their high endeavours, he received not his own from those he served and honoured,—he had done his duty, had been steadfast, like his own Abdiel, amidst temptations, and

bold amidst dangers, and could drop into the grave honoured, though denounced; and lamented and eulogised, though obviously, by those in authority, hated and scorned.

The missionary, whether political or religious, of any age, must always partake of the spirit of that age, which, as a child, he may follow, or which, as a daring innovator, he may successfully lead and guide. Still he must be of it, and partake of its spirit, while tutored by it, and clearly decipher its tendencies and capabilities before he can fully perform his arduous duties, and leave his heart and genius indelibly impressed upon it. The age itself, and the people which require and hail such bold and penetrating spirits, must be labouring with high and sacred destinies before they can realise their own powers, comprehend the grandeur of the unfolded schemes for a social and political regeneration, or valiantly grapple with the many foes upstarting around them, fearful of change, to defend wrong and oppression, ignorance and slavery. The more crushing the oppression and galling the chain, the more deeply have the minds of the liberators been diffused through enfranchised society, and hence the more fervent should be the gratitude of unborn ages for their gigantic struggles in snapping asunder the iron fetters which had been wrapped around the national soul and paralysed it.

The age which thus gave birth to Milton was one of the most momentous ever recorded—an age prolific of great schemes and changes, mighty spirits and daring heroic actions—forming an episode or parenthesis in the line of regal story, and compris-

ing within a few years events productive of consequences to after days more important than ever took place in our country within so limited a period.

Nearly all histories treat chiefly of kings and queens, courts and courtiers, the intrigues of wily statesmen, and the war and bloodshed which seem as if almost a necessary part of the machinery of human governments, and rarely indeed treat of the people themselves, for whom in the aggregate, kings and statesmen exist and act. In the days of Milton the scenes began to change. Men—the men, and not the mere statesmen of that age—began to question the acts of the despotic king, and showed a disposition to confront him in his aggressions, and withstand his tyranny with an equal or superior power. They then became actors in a great drama; and while the kingdom was scething with the convulsions of a civil war, the current of our history for the first time seems changed; royalty is eclipsed in its splendour by the daring ascendancy of the plebeian power; the basis of the great pyramid is inverted, and the royal apex, revered by the homage of ages, is humbled in the dust. Men, who under a just government had never been heard of, now that the elements of tyranny were thick, and mustering their forces to crush the infant Hercules of rising liberty, girt on their armour and became centres of a crusade for a nobler freedom. Men, and not kings, then became attractions in our own histories, and claimed, while they drew down, the admiration and gratitude of posterity. It is not King Charles but Oliver Cromwell who then becomes the most prominent character in the group of that

ages heroes. Not the gifted Strafford, nor the supple Laud, but the less courtly Pym, and Hampden, and John Milton. The age, such as no age in England had ever before been, was eminently democratic, and yet conservative. It warred not against men and institutions simply as such, but against the improper use of that *might* which threatened to extinguish or trample upon all human *right* to justice and equality. The cry of men was not against Church and State and aristocracy, but the active spirit and determination was to be without them all *as then existing*, rather than with them to wander back to the Stygian night of the middle ages, to forsake, in fact, their very manhood by giving up their rights and claims to think and be free. Thus thinking and feeling, a new and irresistible current of healthy vitality rushed, as it were, into the heart of the nation. Its tendencies and its actions were onward. Placing their trust upon the immutable Rock of Ages, with these men there was life and activity in every motion, strength and vigour in every stroke, enterprise, skill, and victory in every successive struggle. They had, on going to war, either to rid themselves from a hated tyranny, or, being conquered, to prostrate themselves beneath the cloven hoof long upraised to crush them. In the battle for the rights of nature and nations they conquered; and we of the present day enjoy the fruits reaped, after years of growing maturity, from the seeds of the noble principles they then planted and watered with their blood.

Minds are thus moulded in accordance with the spirit and tendency of their age; and while they act are re-acted upon by the innumerable influences sur-

rounding them. But few outstrip time in their views or acquirements; and fewer still receive their just meed of applause or reward from the generation whose spirit they surpass by an earnest, far-reaching, prophetic view of coming events, whose types or shadows are beheld as forerunners, and beyond the interpretation of the great mass of mankind. Amidst such as these, Milton held and must ever hold a conspicuous place. Though never amidst his compatriots engaged in the field, he was yet an admirable fencer. Others were, perhaps, better adapted for subtle diplomacy, or the field of actual war; he was best adapted for the field of contemplation; for advancing and defending principles, and, frequently, arresting the public mind by throwing over it, like an intellectual arch, new views and illuminations of great and pressing truths, then seething in and urging on the national mind to crush despotic tyranny for ever. The mind of the man, as distinct from the poet, was cast in the largest and noblest mould. All the elements of greatness there met and harmonised. No single faculty or quality was eclipsed by others of a more celestial brilliancy. Like an ancient Grecian temple, chaste in its adornments, and simple in its splendour, its magnificence consisted not in detached portions of superior workmanship, but in the simple beauty and noble symmetry of the whole. The broadest comprehension was united to the greatest plainness and child-like simplicity. Logical acuteness was linked to the most vivid and creative imagination, and the most dazzling fancy; and, even with these in their wildest moods and workings, there existed subtle discrimination and exquisite tact in

delineating character or enforcing argument. The highest reach of human conception was united with the minutest knowledge of the mind in its ordinary moods—the deepest speculations on human interests with the profoundest knowledge of matters of fact. If it be said that in the exact sciences he was not profoundly versed, what is it but saying that he was not perfect? And be it remembered that the Baconian philosophy had not then progressed over Europe, nor had the discoveries of Newton then simplified the complex riddles of creation. His prodigious acquirements did not press upon his tenacious memory so as to repress his creative originality. The smoke and dross of human learning could not dim the flame of the intellectual furnace burning within, and maturing all its elements to burst forth in one broad blaze of irradiation ;—it pierced through and impregnated the solid mass, and converted all into its own ethereal essence.

Amidst all his seriousness, his wit in vain seeks concealment. His sarcastic raillery breaks forth amidst the proudest triumphs of his reason. When he breaks Salmasius upon the wheel, or argues for the removal of hirelings out of the Church, or for the freedom of the press, his sweeping rhetoric, his lofty eloquence, and inflamed invective, majestic in their ocean-like rush, astonish while they enchain the mind of the reader, and fix its energies with silent admiration and reverent awe. Nor, when it suits his purpose, does he disdain to assume the armour and do the work of the sophist. In none of his works is he more sincere than in his pleas in

favour of divorce; and, as is quite natural, in none is he more eloquent and impressive. His heart is in the subject; but with all his uncurbed strength and vehemence, his splendour of diction and passionate-ness of appeal, he is only the brilliant sophist still, whose feelings and desires belie his sober judgment. Throughout the whole argument, it is plain he feels his want of a solid foundation; and the whole super-structure, like the frostwork of a night upon a transparent surface, melts before the sunshine of truth and reason.

Qualities or faculties apparently of an antithetical nature, and which, in ordinary minds, often eclipse or paralyse each other, seemed in Milton, by the contrast, to exhibit each other with greater brilliancy. With all his simplicity, his mind is to many of the world a splendid paradox. Surveyed on all sides, he does not seem simply one, but many men united. Most kinds of composition he attempted, and in all he was in his own age unequalled, and in some unequalled in all ages of the world. He who could indite poetry and logic—grammar, ~~the~~ rhetoric, and history—polemics and pleas for education—politics and pleas in favour of divorce—must have possessed versatility of no common order, even though singly, in each department, of but mediocre powers; but when in Milton's mind all these qualifications met, what must have been the height, the depth, and comprehensiveness of its grasp! Like his own angels tearing up the mountains in their warfare—a task unfit for creatures of earth's mould—he seizes subject after subject, and investing each

with a splendour all his own, leaves it a Titanic monument for the after world's admiration.

The mental, in its gigantic proportions, was strengthened, adorned, and hallowed by moral heroism and meek and unaffected piety. However he was employed, or however he moved, or whatever weapons he wielded against this world's powers of darkness, the majesty and simplicity of truth shone around him—formed at once his panoply and shield, his ground of attack or defence. He threw himself, and for ever, by the side of religion; and, by chivalry the most pure and exalted, devoted all his powers for its disenthralment from state chains and superstition, and moved unflinchingly, in darkness as in light, beneath its standard. For him, in a religious sense, the brick conventicle had more charms than the lofty-domed cathedral—the plain preacher of peace, than the surpliced priest. Shut out in material darkness from the teeming splendours of this visible creation, the spiritual Milton could not conceive of the glories of redemption, and the symbolic sublimities and prophetic scenery of the Apocalypse, as being heightened in impressiveness and grandeur, by exposition and enforcement within Gothic walls, and by carved galleries, apostolic images, and many-coloured windows, more than in the square and unadorned building. The internal enforcement of truth upon the conscience—the sublimation of the soul by assimilation through CHRIST to God was the great aim and end in view. With no mere external impressions, or play of the senses, could the mighty soul of Milton be satisfied. Like the dove which disported above the waters of the

deluge, and returned to the ark unable to find rest for its foot—he alone, when rising from the clouded tabernacle of his own spirit, could find an ark of eternal rest amidst the glories shadowed forth darkly to our earthly perceptions when realised and sublimated in God.

We mean not, in truth, to say that Milton had no perception of the beauties of architecture and sculpture, or veneration for the ecclesiastical edifices of our own and other lands. No mind, in fact, can be wholly void of such perceptions and feelings; and in Milton himself, the mould of elegance, whatever in nature or in art was beautiful or sublime, or calculated to elevate and inspire, or be suggestive of the great, the free, the holy and eternal, found an admirer or worshipper. His was not the sickly sentimentalism which abjures the world on purpose to worship God; the altar of his soul was not alone in the tabernacles of men, in the solitude of the monk, or the mountain cell of the hermit. Like Byron, he could make altars of

“The mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, all that see through the great whole,
Who hath produced and will receive the soul;”

Inspire the soul with love, wing its devotions with faith, and lay all its offerings at the foot of the Cross, humbly depending upon Him who endured it; and wherever the altar may be placed, and the offering poured from the full heart, it will be received and treasured by the Holy One. This Milton knew. He saw that our noblest edifices were occupied by a hireling church and a time-serving

ministry — enemies to freedom and panderers to court profligacy; and finding simple truth in conventicles, when banished from cathedrals, he exerted all his powers to elevate and spread the truth taught in the former, by writing against the abuses of the latter. Religion, he saw, was felt and elevated in the one; installed by law, and bound down by forms and ceremonies to suit expediency, in the other. The one was a moral and religious nursery for training minds to a knowledge of Scripture truth, and raising the heart to its Maker; — the other was a State machine, sublime in its liturgical service, and pleasing to many in its easy ritual, but cold and stiff in its pageantry, and appealing more to the outward senses than the inward conscience; from whose consecrated altars the divine right of kings to govern wrong was boldly proclaimed, and where, amidst moral coldness and soul-freezing divinity, all the vials of the Apocalyptic wrath were threatened to be poured upon the heads of the malignant heretics, who openly dared to patronise the *incubus* of Dissent, in defiance of the mingled terrors of episcopacy and the courts of law.

We in our own country, at the present time, have but a faint idea of the nature and extent of the ecclesiastical domination carried on on the Continent in the sixteenth century. By reading we learn much of its operations, but vainly attempt fully to comprehend the nature of its subtle, insolent, and domineering spirit. Great as it is now, it must have been still much greater when, in his youth, Milton visited Italy and exchanged greetings with a kindred spirit — the “starry Galileo.” If, in

Florence, he was attracted by the triumphs of art—and in Rome gazed with awe-struck wonder upon the desolation which ages had scattered around him—he was no doubt repelled by the priestly tyranny he witnessed, and sickened at the thought that his own country, though the flower of Christendom, and the so-called bulwark of the truth, still laboured in some degree under the same benumbing spell, and was even then travelling backward to Rome. To stay it in its course, and prevent it from gaining unlimited ascendancy, as in other countries, and scattering its plagues, was his lofty aim. By so doing he would draw down courtly wrath and priestly persecution, and write himself demagogue in the parti-coloured annals of his country; but he preferred duty to interest, and threw himself in the breach to defend truth and holiness from the rough grasp of rampant intolerance and regal duplicity. He felt himself called upon to prosecute a high and sacred work, and, ever in “his great Taskmaster’s eye,” calmly pursued his onward career amidst the turbulence of opposing elements. ●

It were vain to affirm that none of his sanguine expectations were realised. He saw much more completed than he ever probably dared to hope would be done in his day. The Temple of Freedom was being raised; but the top stone had not been elevated amidst the shoutings and the great joy of the people, when the death of Cromwell opened up the way for the return of the exiled Prince. And when, in their fresh impulse of loyalty, the people opened their arms to receive him, they unconsciously embraced a serpent, who, before the national jubilee at his resto-

ration was well over, had begun to spread his loathsome and contagious venom over the kingdom—had crawled into the recesses of the warm affections which cherished and restored him, and left the hateful slime of his profligacy and hollow ingratitude behind him.

But during the ascendancy of Charles II. and his ribald Court, freedom was only obscured for a season, not extinguished. The minds of men had been elevated into an atmosphere of purer freedom, and could not now, as formerly, believe in the doctrines of kingcraft so absolute and foul as were spreading from the Circean sty of Whitehall. The Pilgrim Fathers carried their principles to a further shore, and there sowed the now ripening seeds of extending empire. The glorious prose productions of Milton had pierced the intellect of the nation, and their truths were felt and condemned in high places—a sure sign of their onward tendency; and the Act of Conformity, seemingly then so triumphant for the intolerant Church, laid, in fact, a broader basis for the future progress of Dissent.

Milton's prose productions, so unanswerable in his own day, have never become popular in ours. Great and interesting as are most of the subjects of which they treat, the style and language are, in many respects, above the reach of the popular mind. We have seen a small volume, entitled, "The Poetry of Milton's Prose," consisting of the most glowing extracts, which, like the selected beauties of some authors, might give some feeble conception of his powers, were it not that their extent and universality defy compression within such narrow limits; and that

such can no more give the reader a view of the whole intellectual vast, than can a glance of a land-bound creek of the sea give the spectator an idea of its boundless immensity. Mere skimmers of periodical literature, or hunters after the morbid of fiction, need never expect to find amusement from his weighty prose, or gratification from any looseness of sentiment they may think to discover. In every respect they are a colossal study, calculated, when well understood and appreciated, to elevate the studious artizan as well as the man of science and erudition—to arouse the slumbering feelings to a love of the true, the beautiful, and the free—and in every way to foster the growth of ennobling sentiment, holy aspiration, and fraternal love.

The knowledge that we possess of ancient literature is merely fragmentary. We have only the light shining from a few of its intellectual beacons; and there is no doubt but that the republic of letters in Greece had its many feeble lights as well as its eclipsing suns, even as is the case in all lands in our own day. In the gifted mind originality is intuitive, and produces its riches without that severe labour required from lesser minds. The difficulty is in directing its energies well, and expending them upon proper subjects, so as to strike and be felt at the core of the public heart and soul. The ancients were thus necessarily original, because they had no predecessors. No matter how strikingly original may be the moderns, their originality is called in question, because they had the ancients and all preceding literature before them to mould their ideas of things and store their memories. But, we would ask—was

Bacon less original than Aristotle?—was Shakspeare less original than Eschylus?—was Milton less original than Homer or Virgil?—was Burke or Fox less original than Demosthenes or Cicero?—who had Scott for a prototype? Originality, in truth, depends on neither country nor age. That form or condition of society best adapted for its development, and in which it can best be felt, will inevitably draw it forth, wherever, or however existing. And one great and remarkable fact will always be found connected with it;—no great original minds have yet appeared as oracles of their respective epochs, or discoverers of hidden truths or principles, but have arisen at those very epochs when their voices were most required to utter great truths; and their discoveries were of most benefit to the world. And so of great poets. Chance has not the direction of genius, any more than the direction of the planets round the sun, or the ominous comet in his eccentric sweep through space. Events and circumstances shape minds and precipitate other great events. Dante's original muse was matured in adversity, and uttered its voice in bitterness and grief; but thus his misfortunes prompted his great poem. Milton's was also matured amidst convulsions, and drew back the veil from other worlds in affliction and darkness. We know more of these and other modern authors than we know of the ancients, and hence some value their productions less. They do not gaze upon them through the dense mist of antiquity, enlarging their dimensions, and so lower them to their own standard. Such seem to favour the absurd notion that intellect degenerates in every successive age, and that of old

there were intellectual giants such as no modern age has produced. Alas, for such faith in the capacities of our race !

Milton more highly appreciated man. Bacon saw prophetically into futurity, and realised, in anticipation, the onward progress of society through his own method of philosophic induction ; but yet, great as was his mind, and universal as were his talents and genius, his expectations of the world's progress were more through material calculations and physical improvements than the spiritual elevation and majesty of mind. Imaginative though he was, his freedom ranged through the domain of science, of thought and feeling, of the general and the particular, and his destinies were not those of a cold, reasoning philosopher. How different from Milton !

Regarding with becoming respect all the productions of science and art, Milton still considered the material elevation of men and society as only secondary to the sublimer elevation of the soul and heart through freedom, education, and religion. Knowing that mind must always keep pace with, or rather lead philosophy and the arts, he would still make these only the stepping-stones, or the scaffolding, for elevating man to a higher and purer existence, and drawing him in all his aspirations nearer to God. Nor was all this a purely poetical ideal of the question. It was the poetical and noble view of man's genuine nature and greatness, based upon the practical and real. He said, to be really free must be magnanimous, just and good. To be truly taught, he must teach himself, and not be alone dependent on government schools and uni-

versities. To be truly great, and write well on great and laudable things, he must unite in himself all the characteristics of virtue capable of making him a pattern of wisdom and goodness to other men and nations and ages.

Holding such views, Milton longed to see a nation—nay, more, a world—of such men; and anxious to show them their true position in society, he strips disguise after disguise, from the corrupt conventionalism of courts, the decrees of tyrannical rulers, and rapacious, persecuting priests, and then points them to the remedies for eradicating the social disease from the mind and heart of the nation, and preparing the way for a healthier tone of morals and a nobler freedom. And while thus arousing and directing the national mind, his own life corresponded in many respects with his great doctrines and precepts. He was his own exemplar. He sought to elevate man, that through men nations might be elevated, the rigours of law relaxed, humanity cherished, the temple of freedom reared and universally admired, and moral justice and truth, based upon religion, influencing all the acts and negotiations of enlightened and enfranchised man throughout the world. Thus, though Milton the poet be great, Milton the man is equally great. He fears no human power in his advocacy of human right. No court frown appals him; no priestly anathema stings him; no obloquy, however keen, deters him from performing his duty. Ever "in his great Taskmaster's eye," and erect in his own manhood and internal strength, he travels through the wilderness of this world, enlightened in his darkness, and

strong in his weakness, with an unseen light and power—until at last the weary body, overcome, can no longer contain the spiritual mind within, and sinks, a shattered but once beautiful casket, into its original elements; while the triumphant spirit, free from its earthly bonds, waves its triumphant wings among the angels and archangels whom once he sung; and now, illumined with eternal light, rejoices with the myriads that circle his throne.

JOHN MILTON AS A POET.

HAVING glanced, in a preceding paper, at the age, and the intellectual and moral qualities of Milton, a consideration of his claims to supremacy as a poet naturally follows.

The greatness and popularity of "Paradise Lost" has, in a great measure, had the effect of throwing the earlier and lesser poems of Milton into the shade; and to many ignorant of the more unbounded extent of his universal genius, he seems only the author of the sublimest poem in the world. "Paradise Regained" we might imagine had been composed to calm down and soothe the excitement under which some portions of "Paradise Lost" were written, did we not know that even in scenes, and amidst events the most arousing, the mind of the writer was habitually mild and unruffled. Portions of "Paradise Lost" may have been composed when under the dominion of agitated feelings, aroused by persecution, which unconsciously found fitting expression in the verse. He was

"In danger, and with darkness compassed round ;"

and hence the spirit in which his self-reflecting episodes in his great epic were written was more

nervous and bitter than when he composed "Paradise Regained." Then his once bitter feelings were mellowed and softened down, and the storm of tyranny blew past unheeded. So, also, as if springing forth in accordance with the changed mind of the poet, the Satan of "Paradise Regained" can bear no comparison with the Satan of "Paradise Lost." He bursts forth before us no more the great though fallen archangel, menacing heaven with his thunders, but the subtle Jesuit, employing fraud, falsehood, and cunning, to prevent his own head from being eternally bruised, and the kingdoms of the world ultimately wrenched from his grasp. He is there the crushed rebel, conscious that all his powers of retaliation by force of arms were vain, acting the wily diplomatist, and endeavouring to vitiate all the conqueror's victories, by turning their results in his own favour, and thus overreaching his antagonist by a stratagem of words.

Milton's preference of this poem to "Paradise Lost" need be no theme of wonder; it was the natural result of the change in his own mind. In sorrow, and often in danger, he sung of the fall and its dire consequences in both worlds. With a subdued spirit, and a stedfast faith and hope, he sung of the triumphs of redemption; and modest and simple, as became him in dealing with the stupendous subject, he makes no attempt to pierce the inscrutable mysteries of the incarnation or of the cross; and only in scattered fragments of beauty and sublimity, seems to emulate his former energy and greatness, and show that, though subdued, he is the giant still.

If the reader of "Paradise Lost," has ever seen the

comparatively ignorant of "Paradise Regained"—of "Lycidas;" the noblest elegy ever dedicated to the manes of the dead—of the "Hymn to the Nativity," the sublimest in the language upon the subject, and of his other minor, though splendid, efforts, the loss is compensated by the feeling of entire veneration which possesses the mind after the first perusal of his great work. The subject itself, of such an awfully sacred character, naturally awakens feelings of veneration, but when seen through the light of grandeur which the poet flings around it, we identify the sublimity with his own mind, and transfer our veneration to him. He then seems to stand upon a sacred eminence above the height of the less gifted, but yet distinguished brotherhood of poets of all ages, nations, and languages. The very darkness in which, to a great portion of his readers, his similes and allusions are hid, tends to strengthen the awe with which he is contemplated; for while he arouses wonder by the force and splendour of his descriptions, he creates an equal wonder at the boundlessness and diversity of his attainments, which, when converged into one burning focus through the refining and transforming glass of his imagination, clothes his creations with a more superhuman glow. It is thus that, to understand him aright, without wading through commentaries, his readers should bring to the task a mind furnished in some degree like his own. In Homer, all is clear to the simplest, because composed in the infancy of the heroic age, ere learning, according to some, had taken root in the soil of curiosity, and flung its sunshine over half the globe. And it is thus that Homer is, in some degree, considered

superior to Milton, and worthy of more universal homage; for in the "Iliad" all appears to spring clear, fresh, and vigorous, from the ever salient well of his invention, without effort or elaboration, and simple to the simplest reader; while in Milton we imagine we perceive, though quite natural to him, an elaboration of display, in no way required to exhibit his powers, because, wholly unfettered by the weight of his learning, his genius naturally soared in the loftiest elements, and shaped its most glorious visions from themes unknown to the heathen, and attainable only through exuberant erudition, but which, though aiding his powers and firing his muse, he had no need so ostentatiously to exhibit.

And it is through the great extent of his learning that Milton gives a successful disclaimer to the superficial dogma, that poetry flourishes best in an age of superstitious darkness; or else how is it that he, with a mind so richly stored, could yet revel in the regions of infinite beauty, and draw from his unconfined imagination visions and creations of the most diffusive magnificence? His passions may have been subdued; he may, as Dryden expresses it, have "read nature through the spectacle of books;" but his love of truth, as drawn from the volume of nature in all its changing phases, and from the volume of Nature's God in all its depths, was still the same. In all his aspirations after freedom, in all his controversial labours—amidst every excitement, every peril—amidst misfortune and misery, surrounded by darkness, and assailed by the howlings of persecution, he strictly and, martyr-like, adheres to the tenor of his early resolutions; and liberty, based upon the im-

mutable foundations of eternal truth, was the grand and prominent object which, in his active life, he sought to establish—the one absorbing feeling of his earnest soul. His feelings may have been hushed, so that the ordinary passions of men had for him but little inspiration; and the passionate eloquence of the heart, instead of spending its burning thoughts and visions in anticipations of unexisting happiness, gave birth to the holy and the pure, the sublime and the beautiful, in strains of brighter originality and fervour. His “Comus,” the bright dream of his youth, is almost void of any exciting passion: but tenderness and sensibility are exquisitely mingled with unaffected power; and the measured cadence and music of the verse is only equalled by the beauty of the varied imagery and the moral purity of the sentiments. Of a like nature, and grouped like stars apart from the crowd, are his other lesser poems. He may not be a Petrarch among sonneteers, but, despite the sneers of Dr. Johnson, who among his English competitors can stand by his side? His imagination clothes its favoured offspring, of whatever kind, in ethereal forms and robes; and exquisite in harmony of numbers as in sentiment, both of mirth and melancholy, his “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso” partake of all the characteristics of his mind, and rank among the most delightful of his creations.

Considering the subject of “Paradise Lost” in all its immensity, it appears, at first sight, too high, too broad, and too deep for human comprehension to grasp. If the themes of the fall and the redemption are so deep and glorious, and in all their mighty meanings are only so far disclosed in the heavens

above as to arouse the desire of angels for a still deeper knowledge of their mysteries, how daring must have been the human intellect which, on more than archangels' pinions, attempted to pierce the thick darkness of that excessive light circling the throne and the councils of God! And if the very attempt, to human apprehension, seems to border upon the blasphemous, with what wonder must we gaze upon its successful completion! and, standing upon the earth as upon the great archway of time, hear from the very Godhead the fiat for the creation of hell and the punishment of the rebel angels, and the unfolding, after the fall, of the grand scheme for the redemption of the world through his Son!

The battles of the Gods and the Titans in "Hesiod" we at once feel to be wild and grotesque, though ambitious—the outpourings of a dark mythological mind—which leave but a faint impression behind. The "Prometheus" of Æschylus, chained to the Caucasus, and in ~~his~~ proud disdain inveighing against fate and the tyrannous gods who thus, amidst the tortures of the consuming vulture, make him their sport and prey, grows upon the mind like a terrible incubus, sublime even in the clearness of its outlines, and seems to transport us into some ante-mundane world, ruled by destiny and thunder-awed by the bolts of Jove.

Still, amidst all the grandeur of the poem, the mind of the reader, like "Prometheus" himself, is bound to the earth, and feels a lack of that ethereal quintessence which leaves such an indescribable richness upon the intellectual palate in Milton's higher creations.

Dante's "Hell" is earth transformed and perpetuated, amidst torments clear, palpable, and tangible. The "Inferno" is a transparent analysis of the scenes and tortures of Erebus, of every kind and degree. The "Paradise" and "Purgatory" are distinguished by the same characteristics. In them all we perceive material scenes around us and before us, with all their kindred associations—often sublime, indeed, in their pictured horrors, and beautiful in their robes of light, but wanting in that transcendental gloom and glory, and indefinite vastness, so attractive in its very sublimity in Milton's regions of sorrow and of joy: Dante created his "Hell" and his "Heaven" to people them with his foes and his friends, and what characters he chose from history and the Greek mythology;—to Milton was reserved the more gigantic task of entering the spiritual eternal world before time was—of picturing before us creation in its birth and progress from primeval chaos—the expulsion of the thunderblasted angels from the battlements of heaven into the flaming abyss below, henceforth the dominion of Satan and his host—the fiery lake stretched out amidst eternal darkness, with its sulphury shores, volcanic mountains, and regions bitten with eternal frost, and lashed with perpetual storms—the projected revenge of Satan against the Most High, by drawing from their allegiance the young Adam and Eve, sole intelligent inhabitants of the new world, ere sin had transformed its sweet serenity and clouded its smiles with tears.

His hell, unlike Dante's, is thus no mere super-addition to our earth, filled with erring mortals

undergoing eternal punishment. Angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, form and swell the concourse of the mighty lost, great in their fallen majesty, though plunged in penal flames, and terrible in their wrath, when again threatening to wage war against the thrones of heaven. His Satan is no mere grotesque, superhuman monster, as has often been pictured to our imaginative boyhood. The fallen archangel

"Had not lost
All his original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined and the excess
Of glory obscured."

In hell he loses not his distinctiveness of character; and though, unlike the fierce Moloch, he sees how vain were any attempt to regain heaven by force of arms, he still triumphs in the hope of being able to thwart the purpose of God by seeking the new-formed world and blasting its bliss. His pride, his envy, and his malignity against heaven at his defeat and doom, uncurbed, rankle in and exasperate his heart of adamant, knit with frowns his thunder-blasted brow, distend his nostrils with pale and livid rage, and curl his lip with haughty and unconquerable hate. When he rises from the fiery lake where he lay "floating many a rood," the liquid flames, sinking beneath his spiritual might,

"Driven backward, slope their pointed spires, and rolled
In billows, leave it the midst a horrid vale."

When, in Pandemonium, in council with his legions, he unfolds his project of seducing Adam and

Eve in Eden, and asks who will undertake the enterprise, the assembled hosts are mute. When he mounts upward through the undisturbed realms of chaos and old night, and meets such signal rebuffs from the anarchs of old, Orcus, and Hades, and Demogorgon, he again, superior in power,

“Mounts upward, like a pyramid of fire.”

Sin and death, his own monstrous offspring, cannot dismay him, or prevent him from leaving the gates of hell to survey the new world and blast its prospects: Then, when he lights upon the earth's outermost convex—when he soliloquises the sun, or o'erhangs the wall of Eden, and thinks of the glory he has lost and the hell of unextinguishable horrors he has gained—his deep malignity and despair, and his thirst for revenge, are rebouled in fury, and taint, as with a mildew, the whole celestial region; and, thus armed with all the evil passions predominant in hell, he addresses himself to the work of ruin, and completes it, when

“Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;
Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.”

This magnificent conception—this vast and tremendous creation, so perfect in both outline and filling up (if that which is so vast and indefinite can be said to have any outline)—is the most attractive in the poem. Tender and beautiful as are some of the scenes in Eden, and gloriously magnificent as is the scenery and the angelic host surrounding the

throne of the eternal, bathed in intolerable splendour, Satan, and "the deep tract of hell," are more attractive from their very repulsiveness. His iron and indomitable will, his spiritual vastness and supremacy, though fallen, which even the Deity cannot crush into annihilation—his proud and lofty menace, as he rises from the lake of fire armed at all points as he fell, with spear and javelin, and strides towards the shore, hurling defiance at heaven, and exclaiming—

" Farewell, happy fields,

Where joy for ever reigns! Hail, horrors! hail
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor! one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
Here we may be secure; and in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven"—

give him an awful pre-eminence over every other character ever drawn and embodied by human genius.

The number of characters in "Paradise Lost" are necessarily limited, and, except the young Adam and Eve, are either above or beneath our sympathies, except such as are always drawn forth by the contemplation of virtue struggling with ensnaring vice, intent on ruin. There our first parents, however, in their naked, unblushing innocence, and even after their fall, concentrate our love and admiration. In them we behold the first created of the innumerable tribes and nations of the earth, and containing in themselves the quintessence of the excellencies of all. From the countenance of the unfallen Eve radiated

all the rays of human beauty, of female prudence, holiness, and love, which have ever distinguished the sex. In Adam, as in an original fountain, was concentrated all the perfection of human intelligence and intellectual greatness which has since dignified the minds of the world's sages and poets.

The heroes and heroines of all other great poets are merely human, and, in their fallen condition, are naturally swayed by all the passions incident to humanity. Milton, in drawing our first parents, had emphatically to create a new order of beings, and place them in a new creation, externally adapted to their internal perceptions of moral beauty and holiness. His great object was to represent them human, and yet immortal—young, and yet matured in understanding—beautiful, and yet unconscious of pride—free, and yet following the divine will—humble, and yet elevated—influenced by hope, yet without fear or despair—devout and reverential, yet deputed rulers of the new creation—influenced by passions and desires, yet all these subordinated to that divine passion in which their whole souls were wrapt—their love. The difficulties attending this he overcame, and Adam and Eve, in all their naked and unadorned beauty and grace, unconscious of shame, rose up before us, as from the wand of an enchanter, the mortal types of Deity himself—the mortal and the immortal, the pure spirit with the gross elements of earth.

In strict conformity with their characters, Eden, the scene of their first habitation, was to be drawn,—a beautiful tract of country, where mingled in profusion all the sweets and riches necessary for their

wants and happiness, and where was to be performed the first momentous scenes in the great drama of time and the universe.

The absence of human passions, as we now understand them, in "Paradise Lost," we consider negatively a beauty, as the introduction of those kinds of human emotion most natural to ourselves, even into the most tender scenes between the wretched apostates of our race, before and after the fall, and ere they were aware of the nature of their love, or of that misery they brought upon the world, would appear forced and unnatural.

All the other characters are either above or below human emotion. Angels, perceiving the justice of God, could not weep over their fallen brethren, or sympathise with them in the excess of their unutterable woes. Gazing from the crystal battlements of heaven into the regions of despair, they might wonder at the fatality of the angelic revolt, and their expulsion thence, and desire to fathom still deeper the profound mysteries of the stupendous scheme thus far disclosed; but the great gulf was yawning between them, and they could as soon pass its depths as manifest sorrow at the rebels' doom, or unholy triumph at having themselves withstood and conquered the temptation. There might be amazement and joyous triumph, but all was tempered and winged with devotion; and, gazing upon the resplendent brow of the Messiah, returned victorious over his foes, the mighty song which burst from their hallowed lips swept in breezes of harmony through the infinite empyrean.

In contrast to this, look again and yet again to the passions which reign dominant in hell, and by

their intensity deaden the consuming fierceness of the liquid fires encircling the fallen legions. Look again upon the great archfiend, as he stands like a tower, with outspread wings, o'erlooking the illimitable abyss. How fierce is the glare of his now dimmed but yet flashing intellectual orbs! How charged is that brow with thunder! How deep and fixed is the scorn—how intense the all but omnipotent emotions with which he apostrophises hell, and addresses the sun! How iron and resistless the will with which he tramples upon fate or destiny itself, and with spiritual might endures, and by enduring conquers, the torments of the flames! The restlessness of earthly ambition, we know, yields but little repose to the mind under its influences; and the burning heat of an implacable revenge, absorbing all the better feelings, and arming the soul with the attributes of a fiend, has not been unfelt upon earth; but in Satan the grasping ambition is for the universe—the revenge scorching the fallen archangel's indomitable spirit is against the Most High, whose thunders he aims at hurling back, and, usurping his sovereignty, adorning his scarred brow with the diadem of eternity. What a vast conception is embodied in the character! yet the whole seems easy and familiar to the gifted mind of the poet. He enters the regions of woe with a consciousness of his mighty energies to create and picture its horrors, and fill the rebellious minds of its blasted inhabitants with all the terrible passions which revenge can prompt when goaded by a ruthless despair.

Splendid as is the imagery of Homer, and boundless as is the exhibition of character and scenic

display in Shakspeare, there are no scenes or characters in the creation of either poet comparable to these. All the deities of Homer possess few attributes above the merest mortals. No spiritual might is by them exercised in wielding the sceptre of the universe, and conducting its affairs; no mental energy, beyond human, is aroused or displayed, to repel by its awfulness, and yet attract by its power, the worshippers at the Olympian mount. Even in the sublimest scene in the "Iliad"—that in which the gods descend to swell the fight beneath the Trojan walls—the effect is marred by the incongruity apparent in the deities leaving their supernal abodes and mingling in the warfare among men, but certainly not more so than is the effect represented as being wrought upon external nature—the streams arrested in their course, the mountains shaking, and redoubling peals of thunder rending the poles, while, from the terror occasioned by the noise and confusion of the conflict, Pluto, in his infernal caverns, leaps from his throne. The incongruity, however, so obvious to us, would not strike the minds of those to whom the poet sung, as such representations accorded with the dark system of their mythology.

The incongruity pointed out by some critics, between the spiritual agents of Milton and their spheres and modes of action, does not, and indeed cannot, strike so strongly as this, even though, in contradistinction to the gods of Homer, the angels of Milton are truly represented in their spiritual character; as a great portion of the poem is taken up by the speeches and actions of those beings in a

manner which we are taught to believe consistent with their commission from on high; and, as is well known, all human knowledge of spiritual beings, and their modes of agency, can only be comprehended by material symbols and analogies; and, hence, no other method of description could have been adopted than that so well employed. The fatal rock upon which he, like other poets, might have split, and wrecked his impressive sublimity,—that of attempting exactly to define the limits, forms, and relative proportions of what in reality can admit of no definition,—he has well avoided; for though the idea that we are conversing with pure spiritual agents in visible material forms, jars with the evidence of the senses, yet the indefinite obscurity and murky grandeur enwrapping Satan and his host, and the incomprehensible splendour investing the spirits of heaven, while filling the imagination almost to bursting, throws over all a robe of tremendous interest and mystery, and sets all measurement by any human standard at defiance. Even in the awful descriptions of the angelic war, the same indefinite and swelling grandeur invests the whole and overwhelms the imagination. All the confusion and desolation which we can conceive war capable of engendering to a whole world in arms and contention, and the results of which in a lesser degree is often witnessed, appears melancholy among men; but here rebellion is waged against heaven itself by the revolted offspring of its eternal Monarch, aiming at his dethronement. Squadrons of cherubim and seraphim meet in awful conflict with legions innumerable of the unhallowed apostates, and the common weapons of war, feeble in

the hands of the mighty combatants, are superseded by the hills, which they pluck from their foundations and hurl in the air; until, to end the war, the Messiah leaving the mount of his glory, enters his chariot, rushes to the conflict, and, grasping the thunders of omnipotent wrath, consigns them to their eternal prison, amidst convulsions which shake all but the throne of God. In human wars death rages triumphant. In these wars death, as familiar to us, is not introduced, as spiritual existence is interminable, and the conqueror

“ Meant not to destroy, but root them out of heaven ;”

but, spiritual death, which dies not, then commenced that gloomy reign which spreads its baleful horrors throughout eternity.

For the successful creation and embodiment of such stupendous scenes and characters, Milton, of all men that ever existed, was alone competent. His mind, a centre around which the departed spirits of all ages slumbered, but ready at the call of the conjuror, Memory, to start into life, instead of being clogged by their imparted riches, conscious of its own inherent strength, rose more triumphant; and through the very excess of that varied erudition, seemed in its outpourings, an intellectual volcano belching streams of molten gold. When it is said by Pope that in “Paradise Lost” he burns throughout with the force of art, the character of his mind is lowered, and his genius misunderstood. No poet was ever more artless or less given to study effect. Much as he had studied the art—lofty, in his early productions, as he had already proved the standard

of his genius to be, he never lowered his natural dignity by making himself the slave of art, further than was necessary for the combination of his subject into the one great theme. He possessed an art, indeed, inseparable from his great learning,—the art of naturally exhibiting those intellectual stores through the magnificent dress of his thoughts; but he possessed not that art often practised by lesser minds, of colouring tinsel with the hues of gold. His mind was in itself a depository of the richest ores. Into his native element—the sublime, contemplating objects the most tremendous or magnificent—he wings his way with a power at once instinctive, easy, and unconfined—full at once of dignity and grandeur. He did not give birth at times to solitary though brilliant flashes of genius, and then sink enervated into more profound inactivity. Always upon the wing, and even amidst the services he rendered to the struggling Commonwealth, and to the cause of liberty in after ages by his controversial labours, “Paradise Lost,” the grand production of his after solitude, was being moulded in the womb of his mind—was arranging itself into form, and combining all its scattered elements, all its glorious visions, to be re-cast by the great poetical Alchemist into one unrivalled creation. Inspired in as high a degree as human nature can perhaps be inspired by a uniformly steady faith in Scripture and in God, his genius became tinged with a celestial glow; and while a pantheistic admirer of nature, he was thus a pure and sincere theist in the truths of the Godhead. The great elevation to which he rises in the sublime and the magnificent arouses our

wonder, and tends, in some degree, to dim our perception of those parts where beauty, mingled with the tones of kinder feeling, succeed those scenes of terrific grandeur, those representations of the deep abyss, of whose secrets he made himself the great mystagogue. Ordinary themes adapted to common minds, and which often engage the pens of lesser poets, found no worshipper in him. He rose at once to the supernal. The glories of the beatific vision,—the mysterious communion with celestial intelligences, of which souls less elevated than his see but the shadow and feel but the hallowed import,—were seen by him with a clearer vision, and felt with a more palpable certainty. And if he seldom gives utterance to those gentler feelings and emotions of our nature, which, from passions subdued were more etherealised, it is because his spirit, weary of the turbulent whirlpool of politics, and the absorbing interests of common minds, and, by the darkness of his outward vision, more intensely lighted up within, was fixed in its gaze upon the worlds of interminable being, and seemed, in rearing its immortal superstructure, to be only disporting amidst the bright realms of its own creation. The passions which yield to the pens of other poets all their depth and inspiration, in his mind became purged of their material grossness, and sublimed in the furnace of a loftier contemplation. He passed the range of human thought—he gazed into eternity, and peopling its awful profounds with his own creations, his vision, unimpressed with emotion, gazed steadily into its depths and became in reality—a SENSE. And thus it is that many look upon his great work like some

gigantic pyramid which awakens in all their suggestive trains the emotions of the sublime and the beautiful; whilst its hieroglyphical carvings carry the mind backward to far distant ages, and resuscitate the beings who reared the mighty pile designed for eternity. The view may be cold, but it is grand and imposing; its vast proportions awing, while expanding the mind; its beauties awakening our admiration; and, though the softer emotions be undisturbed, filling the mind with spectre-like visions, distant, dim, and fluctuating, and awakening the sublime in all its majesty.

It has been observed that the subject of Milton's great poem is, in point of natural sublimity, immeasurably above all that can exercise the imagination. Homer's subject belongs to earth—to life—but these in their associations he clothes with a prodigality of beauty and splendour which exalt the mind to the highest pinnacle of earth. In fiery impulse, in clearness and vigour of description, and in the mould, expression, and action of character, the mind of Homer resembles that of Shakspeare more than Milton—though it must be admitted that Shakspeare, in fertility and variety of invention, eclipses all intellectual suns. Milton's subject, if requiring less invention in the construction of his plot, required, on the other hand, a vast extent of Scripture erudition and philosophy, and a fire of genius to illuminate and inflame all, and raise still higher the standard of uninspired sublimity; acquirements and attributes which he alone could boast, and by which he reached the highest summit of literary ambition,—gained the garland of immortality vouchsafed by all

succeeding ages of an admiring world. Well has
Cowley sung:—

“ He passed the bounds of flaming space,
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze:
He saw, till blasted with excess of light—
He closed his eyes in endless night.”

ON MILTON AS COMPARED WITH DANTE AND TASSO.

DANTE arose amidst the night of superstition. Borne down, like Milton, with accumulated sufferings and woes, he first, as a poet, broke the seal of gothic darkness,—gazed through the mist of ages upon the shores of antiquity and their intellectual wonders,—through the glass of inspiration upon the realms of light and darkness shrouded from mortal eyes; and daring to climb the bewildering mount, where Homer and Virgil struck their lyres, borrowed from oracles more divine than the Grecian, a spirit of kindling power and prophetic energy. Blasted by the wreck of his hopes, robbed of his deserts and surrounded by an ocean of sorrow, he seems to have given vent to the bitterness of his soul with regard to his earthly expectations, when he wrote upon the portals of hell, "*here there is no hope.*" His poem, as the first which arose amidst gothic darkness, and almost, it is said, brought a new language into existence, would, from these circumstances alone, command a high degree of attention. It stands amidst the dark circumstances of its birth like a brilliant rainbow upon an ebon firmament without a neighbouring star to dim the lustre of its mingling hues;—a circlet of solitary light amidst a globe of gloom.

Those who read the productions of great authors only through translations, naturally lose much of the fire and power of the original. That which should be a copy is too often a paraphrase, and they who criticise it thus, often receive and circulate false impressions and estimates. We thus often feel in perusing ancient and foreign authors; and never felt so more fully than when perusing Cary's translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy," and Wright's translation of the "Inferno," and attempting a comparison between Dante and Milton. A translator may possibly, indeed, add to, as well as detract from, the merit of the original, when he surpasses the author in mental vigour and genius;—but the translators of Homer and Dante, we apprehend, were in little danger of adding to the merits of the originals by any additional creations of their own. Mr. Cary's translation is allowed to possess great merit; its greatest drawback being an attempt at imitating, too closely, the massive style of Milton, and exhibiting his author in a dress, unfit for any but Milton to wear. Mr. Wright's translation of the "Inferno," the noblest part of the work, into the terza rima, is said to be more close and faithful, preserving more of both the spirit and form of the original.

The mainspring of the greatest works of many great authors may be traced throughout their individual history, as well as through the mental conformation which gives shape and color to their creations. Dante and Milton are thus enshrined in their country's histories. Dante was a Florentine, born in 1265, of a rich and noble family. He had been a keen and able politician, and shone at various

times as an ambassador, and was even elevated to the seat of Priore, or President of the Republic. He had been a Guelph, or an adherent of the Pope, but became involved with the Ghibellines, an opposite party, friendly to the claims of the German Emperor, and then, amidst the sanguinary discords and struggles which took place between them, Dante was condemned to perpetual exile, lost all his estates and property, and never more beheld his wife and family; but wandered up and down Italy a refugee, and dependent upon patrons; learning meanwhile how "hard it is to climb other peoples stairs, and how salt is the bread that is given in charity."

The whole of the "Divine Comedy," is a vision. Dante loses himself in a dark forest. Three wild beasts rush past him. Virgil appears, and offers to conduct him through the nine circles of hell, and the expiatory abodes of purgatory. Dante accepts the offer, and they journey onward; and having passed the gate, with the awful inscription, survey with searching minuteness the regions of sorrow and of expiation. Virgil is not, however, empowered to conduct the poet through paradise, the residence of the blessed; but Beatrice, his early love, wanders with him through all the regions of beauty, happiness and bliss, and with her own eye makes the glory more bright, and with her own presence enhances its degrees of happiness.

It is clear from the life and misfortunes of Dante, that this poem was composed less for a solace of his wandering life, and a thirst for immortal fame, than as a means of revenge upon his enemies; by placing them in the various circles of hell, and recounting

their histories; and a method of immortalizing his friends by translating them into heaven. The tyrants, traitors, and factious demagogues which at that time, by their rival claims and discords, distracted Italy, and filled it with rapine and bloodshed, he places with his enemies, the Guelphs, in the lowest regions of the abyss; and, even, those of his own adopted party, the Ghibellines, who had betrayed their country, or been profligate in their lives, or acted with cruelty or duplicity to their enemies, he consigns to the same circles. The placing of some of the then living characters of his country into that region, and disposing of them in circles of torment, intensified according to their degrees of guilt, and the placing of those, at the same time, friendly to his political schemes for regenerating Italy, in eternal bliss among patriots and legislators, and the benefactors of mankind in all ages, might, had the poem been widely known in his own age, have drawn upon him a wrath, and edged a persecution, even more deadly than that which already pursued him. But, in truth, in thus consigning his foes and his friends to endless woes and beatitudes, he found some solace for his many troubles, and a method of perpetuating the memory of his wrongs, and his oppressors, to a far posterity. It is obvious that in the very depths of hell he gloats with something of a fiend-like ferocity among his imprisoned foes, with other innumerable victims undergoing eternal torments, and with a minute picturesqueness of delineation places all so clearly before us, as to render them in appearance not fanciful, but real. So intense, indeed, is his appetite for the horrible and so vividly

has he pictured all, that Purgatory, after rising from the Stygian lake, seems dull, tame, and spiritless ; and even heaven, with all its splendour and angelic beauty and variety, seems so far deficient in interest, after passing through the infernal regions, that many readers hurry through it, without pausing to mark its many beauties, or wonder at many of its absurdities, displaying less genius.

Thus he displays and expresses the depth of his soul-wrung anguish, the intensity of his passion for heaping revenge upon his malignant enemies ; and the strength of that political partizanship which whetted the hatred of his opponents, the Guelphs, and his own anger, until it all but transformed him into the lion, powerless indeed in his exiled rage, but unsubdued in spirit, though in chains.

Dante's mind was more practical than the mind of Milton. Though both mingled greatly in the strifes of men, in the civil wars and commotions of their respective countries, and were both rewarded with proscription and obloquy by the people and the generation they served, and by their service honoured, yet Dante had less of the true sublime, and more of the clear matter of fact in his composition than Milton, and was, hence, better calculated for practical statesmanship, and the control of parties. Milton had in his youth deeply engraved his name as a poet on the literary pyramid of ages. Dante, until after his exile, had poured forth but little that is known, if any, poetry to distinguish him. In politics, in some other branches of science, and in general learning, he was far in advance of his age. He was likewise a noted soldier in the ranks of the

Florentine cavalry, and was practically, in every respect, a thorough man of the world. Even at the beginning of the fourteenth century he held the doctrine, the nextremely dangerous, if publicly expressed, that the people were not made for kings, but kings for the people. A doctrine which in Milton's day, and partly by his advocacy, received a summary and bloody realization in the execution of King Charles.

The practical and business-like constitution of Dante's mind is fully evinced throughout all his descriptions, and in all the figures of his great poem. A man of science describing an engine, an anatomist lecturing upon a body, or a Belzoni describing an Egyptian pyramid, or an obelisk of eternal granite, could not be more clear and picturesque in their outlines and diagrams, than is Dante in describing Ugolino in the tower of Hunger feasting upon the skull, —the soothsayers walking along and weeping with their faces turned between their shoulders,—Capaneus, proud, sullen, and malignant, in his unconquered rage, as he lies beneath the eternal shower of fire,—Geryon with his human face, and dragons body lying on the precipice overlooking the fiery gulf,—and Lucifer himself, repulsive from the very clearness of his monstrous and shaggy outline. We have thus paintings distinct in every feature and every scene, so that the reader becomes familiar with every cursed spot and woe-struck figure in hell, with the trials and patient purifications of purgatory, and the celestial raptures of heaven. An inductive philosopher could not make an analysis more complete and striking, than does Dante of the Infernal world, and

the beatitudes of bliss. But it is this very distinctness and business-like manner of proceeding which detracts from its sublimity, as much as Milton's indefinite gloom and vastness increases it. Milton, while dazzling with magnificence and horrifying with gloom, leaves an immensity of undefinable grandeur in both worlds to swell the imagination and baffle its powers. When Dante attempts the same, he is less fortunate. While painting hell and its woes, and victims, and heaven and its untold glories, the tortures and the horrors of the one, and the light and happiness of the other, pass all before us, though themselves supernatural, as though earth was the actual scene of their embodied realities. Still this method of drawing out his world of sorrow best suited the purpose of Dante. He had not, like Milton, to climb the vast of Heaven, and dive into the profound of hell on purpose to depict the overthrow of angels, the ruin of worlds, and justify the ways of God to man. His hell and his heaven were more personal matters, and in peopling both he was only emptying his own mind, surcharged with wrath and the memory of love, and making both answer his own ends and political speculations and desires.

This subordination of playful fancy,—this severity and precision of his style, heightening the clearness of the naked outlines and visioned forms of his beings, until they seem to start into living realities before us, produces a greater effect, than if rhetorically written with the intention of being effective. The style is not that of Milton in "Paradise Lost," so much as that of Milton in "Samson Agonistes." In "Paradise Lost" Milton suggests more than he describes. With a single

metaphor he crowds the fancy and the imagination, and masses his metaphors, as in his description of Satan, in such successive clusters, that the mind often labours to comprehend the magnificent whole. In "Samson Agonistes," all is stern, severe, and cold, as if cast in an iron mould to draw forth our wonder, more than our admiration. But all is simple. So it is in the naked strength and sculptured exactness of the scenes and figures in the "Inferno" of Dante. His heaven is, indeed, more diversified and flowery, and often sublime, but it is only earth dressed in robes of greater splendour. With the exception of his angels, which unite the spiritual and the natural, in a beautiful and attractive manner, the celestial figures and outlines of heaven have all the exactness of the living, loathsome scenery of hell. But for the arousing and splendid imagery required for such great supernatural visions of bliss he wanted the enlightened faith and erudition of Milton,—an erudition which, drawn from every source, while strengthening his mind, gave an additional energy to the calm and steady purpose animating his bosom. But Luther had not then appeared, and the age of Dante was one of darkness. Theology was cloistered secure from searching eyes in the cells of monasteries,—not in the heads and hearts of the worshippers of the cross; so that even the knowledge of revelation he possessed, though little, and that little perverted by priestly cunning and gothic superstition, was more than many of the most learned fathers of the church could boast.

To the fanciful reader, therefore, who delights in abundance of tropes and metaphors, much of Dante's

poetry will seem void of the necessary qualities for genuine popularity. Yet when he chooses to be pathetic, or beautiful, or sublime, or to elevate the moral and spiritual above the material, no poet can be more effective. We find no tale of love and passionate guilt more affectionately sorrowful, than that of Francesca of Rimini. "That day we read no more," she says, ending her story, after telling how, at first, her lips and the lips of Paulo clung into a kiss, thus leaving the reader by the abrupt but modest breaking of, to surmise the sequel of their loves, still continued, though in hell amidst despair and punishment. Nothing can possibly be more pathetic than the story of the Suabian Prince Manfred, whom the poet meets in purgatory, and who relates to him the circumstances of his death and the exhumation of his bones; and requests him to visit his "fair daughter" on his return to earth, and inform her of all. No poet ever surpassed him, if indeed any can equal him in the beautiful figures he draws of his angels, and the varieties of the costume in which they appear to him and his guide. And when he sinks the material in sublimity and grandeur, and forgets himself in his subject, none can more arouse our wonder and draw forth our admiration. His description of the awful noise and confusion, the cries of woe and distress, the groans and curses, the smiting and clasping of hands and the accents of despair, echoing throughout that dark and starless region, as he and Virgil drew near the river Acheron, and found Charon ferrying over the lost in his boat, can find few parallels.

“ Here sighs with lamentations and loud moans,
Resounded through the air pierced by no star,
That e’en I wept at entering. Various tongues,
Horrible languages, outcries of woe,
Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,
With hands together smote, that swelled the sounds,
Made up a tumult, that for ever whirls
Round through that air by solid darkness stained,
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.”

Inferno, Cary. Canto III

With the moral errors, theological absurdities, and scholastic philosophy, which he has at times introduced into his poem, we have nothing to do. These were crotchets and dogmas peculiar to his age, and though blemishes in the work, must, along with it, go down to posterity. We look upon him as a great poet, not a moral or political teacher;—and whatever questionable points may be enunciated in his creed, or whatever may be his intolerance in promulgating his political faith, should be set down to the man and the age, and not to the poet.

Milton’s heaven and hell are represented as they existed, when only inhabited by the steadfast and apostate angels; and hence it has been said, that he had less than Dante a plot to construct, requiring less ingenuity in filling all consistently up, and delineating with greater perfection the various characters engaged. Now, the great events in “Paradise Lost” were certainly drawn from Scripture; as the fall and its consequences, and the nature of the agents engaged, were alone circumstantially narrated by the inspired penman. Still, Scripture supplied him with but mere hints of the great subject; and he had thus, still to form his plot,—to construct and har-

monize the great theatres of action,—to draw out in full relief the great performers in the many scenes; and to give such breadth, compactness and unity to each individual character and action, that each might appear distinct, and one, though yet the same. Did he find in Scripture the materials for the erection of pandemonium? Did he turn plagiarist for the character of Satan? for the meeting of sin and death at the gates of hell? or the coming forth of the Messiah, “grasping ten thousand thunders” to destroy the rebel angels? In fact there are in “Paradise Lost,” as minute lines and delicate touches of the artist in delineating the rebels Moloch and Belial, Beelzebub and Mammon, and the angels Michael and Raphael, as ever were drawn by the greatest painters in their masterpieces on canvas. Milton well knew, that in the great family of earth no two human beings were ever in all respects alike, and that endless diversity would likewise obtain throughout the spiritual kingdom of God among his unfallen angels and the apostates of hell, and hence he drew each angelic character, whether true or fallen, with clear lines of distinction.

This is one of the greatest charms in the genius of Shakspeare. He never clothes an abstraction with human attributes, and yet he never drew two characters wholly alike. This indeed in both epic and dramatic composition is the distinguishing feature of true originality; and Milton’s genius was too creative, and his intellectual stores too universal and abundant to induce him to build upon any foundation but his own. Out of Scripture, we know, he could possess no knowledge of angels fallen and upright, of the

true character of Jehovah, or the mission and work of his son. But they were all beyond the reach of his senses. He had seen them not;—he had handled them not;—he only knew of the existence of spirit in a negative sense; and as mere abstractions alone he had to deal with them; and by symbols and analogies alone could he clothe them, and make visible to the understanding, or imagination, what was invisible to sense. Thus sprung forth amidst gloom and penal woe, Satan and his host; and thus the towers and battlements of heaven beaming with eternal light, inhabited by an innumerable company of sinless, and hence, mighty and happy beings, rose before us;—and thus, we are almost led to think, “Paradise Lost,” instead of drawing all its grandeur from the Bible, a noble addition to the established canon of Scripture itself; a something which must by mankind in all ages be venerated and admired, as towering a degree higher than mere human genius, and all but flowing from the pen of divine inspiration.

To form a great plot, therefore, to be successfully carried out by actors, types of which the poet nor human vision had ever seen; and to create platforms in regions into which human eye had never pierced for the consummation of a great drama in which God Himself was to figure, was surely more difficult than the construction of a plot made up of events of frequent occurrence, or of materials drawn from history, however great and attractive. “Paradise Lost” we therefore imagine the greatest poetical wonder of the world: In purpose, plot and execution, it is complete in all its parts; like the human body, a system in itself;—great, God-like, original, one.

Dante, too, had to create; but as his mind was more earthly and less spiritual than Milton's, every scene of his poem partook of the attributes of his mind. The whole, like a volume of beautiful extracts woven into a variegated web, is formed of detached fragments from mythology, from history, from politics, from contemporary incident and character; and from his own individual emotions as influenced by his sufferings, hopes and fears,—as rugged and stormy as his own hell, and scarcely subdued among the freshening dews of paradise. His Satan it must be confessed loses much of its terribleness from the grotesqueness of the shaggy outline; and seems rather the figure of a fantastic monster raised from the vasty deep by the art of a conjuror, than the deliberate creation of so sublime a poet as Dante. His introduction into Heaven of a throne and crown for Henry of Luxembourg, he hoped and expected would be truly prophetic of that prince's being instrumental in restoring Italy to its former greatness,—a prophecy not destined to be fulfilled. Mighty as is the poem; full of grandeur, beauty, sublimity, and often of tender pathos, it is deficient in aim and end. It has no great and noble purpose running through and drawing around it all events and characters, bringing all to a climax, and presenting it to the world,—a magnificent whole.

Though some critics may therefore be right in placing Dante in juxtaposition with Milton, as far as regards their misfortunes in ambition and in love, we cannot subscribe to the justice of that criticism which places him as a poet upon an equal scale.

If he, at times, can boast an equal power, the more ethereal attributes of poetic genius, if ever clearly existing, are smothered in his mind, with now and then a fitful gleam protruding through the gloom, and shewing in bolder relief the uncontrolled ascendancy of his sorrowing emotions, entering into and impregnating and tingeing all objects with their impressive workings. Milton seldom indulges in outbursts of personal feeling. He, indeed, when rising from the Stygian lake into the blooming light of Heaven, makes a beautiful, tender, and holy allusion to the loss of his outward vision,—an allusion, it may be observed, entirely in keeping with the sudden transition from infernal gloom to supernal light, and tending to heighten the effect so powerfully made upon the mind by the magnificent contrast presented by the two opposing worlds. His blindness, perhaps, enabled him to see more clearly the circling gloom of hell without arousing his mournful lamentations; but was it not natural, when drawing a region of holy life and light, that he should feelingly deplore the loss of that important sense, which barred him from all visible access to that world from whose beauties he had to borrow all his analogies! His memory was hence his world; and seldom before had memory been so nobly stored with the golden fruit of erudition, or so able to amalgamate all its riches with the living hues of immortality. "Paradise Lost" is, thus, in itself a Cyclopædia of learning, but not delivered to the world as oracles of morals, as treatises of science, as transcripts of history, or a dictionary of classic lore, but bound up as a casket of diamonds,

through the light of which volumes of universal knowledge are transmitted into the reader's mind. Dante, on the other hand, more sparing of magnificence, resembles, at times, the sullen lurid gloom of a heated volcano, and at other times the same volcano flinging from its scorched crater streams of lava and showers of ashes. Ambitious, and, in his active life, the agent of ambition, his passions and his prospects were elated; and now that he was driven into exile and compelled to eat the ashes of bitterness, to feed upon disappointed hopes, and mourn over his idols perished, the whole tenor of his soul was unstrung, and, like a harp out of tune, sent forth the distressing notes of lamentation and woe.

A few words with regard to Tasso, and we conclude. Dr. Blair asserts that his "Jerusalem Delivered" is the third epic poem in the world. Would he not have done well had he shewn in what tier of the gallery of poets Milton should take his seat? or, after him and the two ancient fathers, shew, at what altitude upon the apex of the pyramid Dante ought to be placed? Addison somewhere speaks of Tasso's tinsel and Virgil's gold;—a great depreciation, and certainly undeserved; for although Tasso may not have equal gold with Virgil, he is nevertheless rich with beauties and brilliant with gems. Uniting deeply the genius of the artist with the sensibilities of the poet, he succeeded in the construction and execution of a great poem,—not indeed an original creation,—suited to the taste of his age and country, and destined to command the suffrages of immortality. Clear and graphic in his descriptions, he moves along with mild dignity and

grace, laying his fancy under contribution for abundant imagery, but seldom overpowering with successive clusters, or covering his ideas with redundant verbiage, yet ever beautiful and flashing with brilliance. By no poet is he surpassed in clearly and exactly defining the individualities of his various characters. His celestial creations are drawn upon a scale of great splendour; but when he attempts to draw out in clear relief the lower regions of the wicked, and their dire inhabitants, he parts with much of his fire and trifles with insignificant, and often burlesque puerilities.

Perhaps, little ever hazarded in the shape of criticism, tended more flagrant to misrep-
 resent the character of Milton's Satan, than Dr. Blair's assertion that he, doubtless, had Tasso's Lucifer before him as a prototype. Dr. Blair was a cold reasoner and not very imaginative man, and could enter but little into the feelings and aspirations of poets; but as those very qualities of mind were, according to some, in his favour as a critic, we wonder at his want of discrimination and taste, in thus awarding such boundless eulogy to Tasso. Dante's Lucifer we have said, is a grotesque monster of enormous stature, with outspread wings, in texture like those of a bat, to each of his treble-sided body, and which by their motion freeze up the river Cocytus,—with three faces, and three mouths, which foam bloody gore, and champing between his teeth Brutus, Cassius, and Judas Iscariot, as in a mill, they are, says the poet,

"Bruised by the ponderous engine."

Tasso is less exact in his description of the same

being than Dante, but nevertheless he seems to have gained upon him in the art of conjuring, when he makes Lucifer's eyes two fiery beacons, and his mouth a volcanic Etna, belching kindled coals and sparks. Here is his description from Fairfax's translation, a work which, with all its obsolete phrases and roughness, we prefer, in its racy strength, to the more polished but insipid translation of Hoole, a man who is said by Sir Walter Scott to have been an adept in transmuting gold into lead.

"The tyrant proud frowned from his lofty cell,
And with his looks made all his monsters tremble ;
His eyes, that full of rage and venom swell,
Two beacons seem, that men to arms assemble ;
His feltred locks, that on his bosom fell,
On rugged mountains, briars and thorns resemble ;
His yawning mouth that foamed clotted blood,
Gaped like a whirlpool wide in Stygian flood.

"And as mount Etna vomits sulphur out,
With cliffs of burning crags, and fire, and smoke,
So from his mouth flew kindled coals about,
Hot sparks and smells that man and beast would choke :—
The knarring porter durst not whine for doubt,
Still were the furies, while their sovereign spoke,
And swift Cocytus, staid his murmur shrill
While thus the murderer thundered out his will."

Now, nothing can be more unlike Milton's Satan, than either of those gigantic figures. Milton drew him as he fell,—an angel still, obscured in glory, but not shorn in power. Wings he had, as all angels are represented having, but he had no horns, no tail, no club feet, no grotesqueness of either limb

feature to add terror to his might and fallen, gloomy grandeur. Certain it is that he can change himself into an angel of light, as easily as he turned himself into the serpent at the fall, or into the figure of a man at the temptation of Christ in the wilderness; and it may be possible that he could assume such shapes, as those drawn by Dante and Tasso; but in all his appearances before men, we should suppose that he shows himself in his most attractive forms; while in his own kingdom among his own angels and victims, he needs no artificial aid to deepen his degradation or increase his misery. He is the lion going about roaring and seeking whom he may devour, yet nothing terrible in his wily approaches to men. He is the prince of fallen spirits, the dweller in outer darkness, the tempter, the adversary, the enemy of God and man. Luring millions to ruin, he is yet unseen. Subtle as the pernicious sweets of his own sins, we recognise him not in all his whisperings and insinuations to arouse and inflame our destructive passions. 'He travels, like light, from region to region, and drinks in the groan of creation's travail.' Leagued with, while directing, millions of his confederate spirits, he girdles the globe as with a zone of death, and scatters despair and desolation in the hearts and among all the habitations of men. And we imagine that to attempt to caricature a being, though fallen and evil, of such powers and attributes, a ruined archangel, a living, thinking, acting spirit, is at once to prostrate imagination beneath its true dignity in poetry, and plunge into the ridiculous, instead of rising to the sublime. This

Milton alone, with admirable tact and judgment, has clearly avoided.

It is true that in no great poem extant are the incidents free from improbabilities. But when, as in Tasso's great poem, enlightened as he was in some degree by revelation, the machinery of spiritual agency is glaringly absurd, and in direct opposition to every principle of sense and sound theology; it is apt to raise the smile of ridicule, which a century ago it was the fashion both in France and England to pour upon it. The introduction of Gods and Goddesses into the *Iliad* is in perfect consistency with the age of Homer, and the Grecian mythology, however ridiculous the whole may appear to us. And if Tasso intended faithfully to paint, even amidst war, the superstitions of the age in which his poem is laid, he had been more effective, if he had kept within the bounds of natural probability; as it is well known, that in that age, though extremely dark and superstitious, no such fables as those he relates about the meeting of the consistory of devils in hell, and the speech of Lucifer, could receive implicit belief. When such meetings in the infernal world are represented in "*Paradise Lost*" as being held before the fall of man, we assent to their possibility; but enlightened as we are by revelation, we look upon Tasso's spiritual machinery as only absurd imitations of pagan mythology. In attempting to unite the classic of former ages, with the romantic and chivalrous of his own, he erred grossly, as far as nature was concerned, in mingling harmoniously pagan fable with Christian faith. None knew better than he, that in wandering

from the truth of nature, and indulging in improbabilities, he was overstepping the limits of that law of truth, or at least apparent truth, within which the flights of imagination ought to be confined; and that too in an age, among the learned at least, comparatively enlightened by the sacred oracles, when men's minds were aiming at a still further projection into that region of truth hitherto to them a region of barrenness and darkness. In mixing historical truth with imaginary fable, the greatest aim ought to be consistency with the ordinary appearances of nature and the events of the world; for when, as in Tasso, this rule is overpassed, though the execution be excellent, the style and trappings soft and brilliant, and calculated to dazzle and attract, there can be little doubt but that those gross blemishes, will, among the thinking at least, impede, in some degree, its circulation.

Dante may be said to have made a successful in-road upon truth and nature; but all Dante's improbabilities are shielded from the storms of criticism, by taking the form and character of vision, and thus, like the "*Pilgrim's Progress*," partaking in part of the allegorical character, and rendering its most glaring absurdities, and horror-striking incidents and narrations, attractive and entertaining,—while Tasso's most violent representations are displayed more in the garb of reality and as incidents and scenery of actual life. But regardless of the age, and the natural trueness of the scenery of his poem, Virgil was his model, and him he followed; and having no doubt read of Julian's attempt to re-construct the temple of Jerusalem being rendered abortive by balls of fire

bursting from the ground and dispersing the workmen, so he, of course, could see no great poetic absurdity in using supernatural machinery in the fanatical warfare for the conquest of the holy city. But though these may be absurdities, they are no balance for his beauties; and though he cannot much boast of originality, it is allowed that, with few exceptions, he is no very servile imitator of Homer and Virgil. What he borrows he analyses and recombines. The subject of his poem being indisputably great, and comparatively of recent occurrence, and of a spirit and character supplying him with scenes and incidents little, if anything, inferior to the warlike age of Homer and the siege of Troy; and by being solely awakened and supported by devotees of a religion numbering in its ranks the majority of Europe, was calculated, one would think, to be more popular, and more generally admired. But to rank with giants, we ourselves must be gigantic. Tasso, though a noble poet, is not, according to the canons of criticism, ranked among this class, though in his own country the greatest favourite, among her greatest poets. He possesses the expressive but not the creative and original, the highest attributes of imagination. Besides this, his subject is a matter of authentic history, which, when interpolated with incidents foreign to probable veracity, usually receives a condemnation more sweeping and severe than if all were absolute fiction.

The far remote, the shadowy and the mystic,—though the incidents be no more thrilling,—strike more powerfully than any well authenticated facts of modern history; and the subject of the “Jerusalem

Delivered" is of the latter class, while the subject of the Iliad, and the very existence of Troy itself, is wrapt in dark traditionary mysticism. Still if any subject connected with the history of Europe for the last two thousand years, was well calculated to form the basis of an heroic poem, the striking episode of the crusades was the subject. Jerusalem had many grand and solemn associations; and the pious aims of the eloquent and fanatical Peter, who aroused Europe to the warlike enterprise which deluged with blood the plains of Palestine,—though fading in the lustre of its poetic glories before the devouring flames of Troy,—was still, if any song of war could have equalled or eclipsed that sung by the Grecian poet, every way calculated as a theme upon which to lavish the most splendid exuberance of genius. Tasso, we therefore think, though not rivalling the brightest stars in the galaxy of poets, yet occupies a lofty station. Like Homer and Virgil, he is more amusing than Milton, and is clearly comprehended with infinitely less pains,—a circumstance which, if allowed to decide the palm of superiority between these poets, would undoubtedly place Milton below them all. But Dr. Johnson affirms that Milton's poem is not the best, only because it is not the first; an observation which strengthens the argument for affirming, that the ancients will receive the palm of superiority whatever be the legitimate claims of the moderns. Nay, in fact, it is the observation itself, that, were Homer and Milton reversed in the order of time, the crown would be placed upon the brows of the latter.

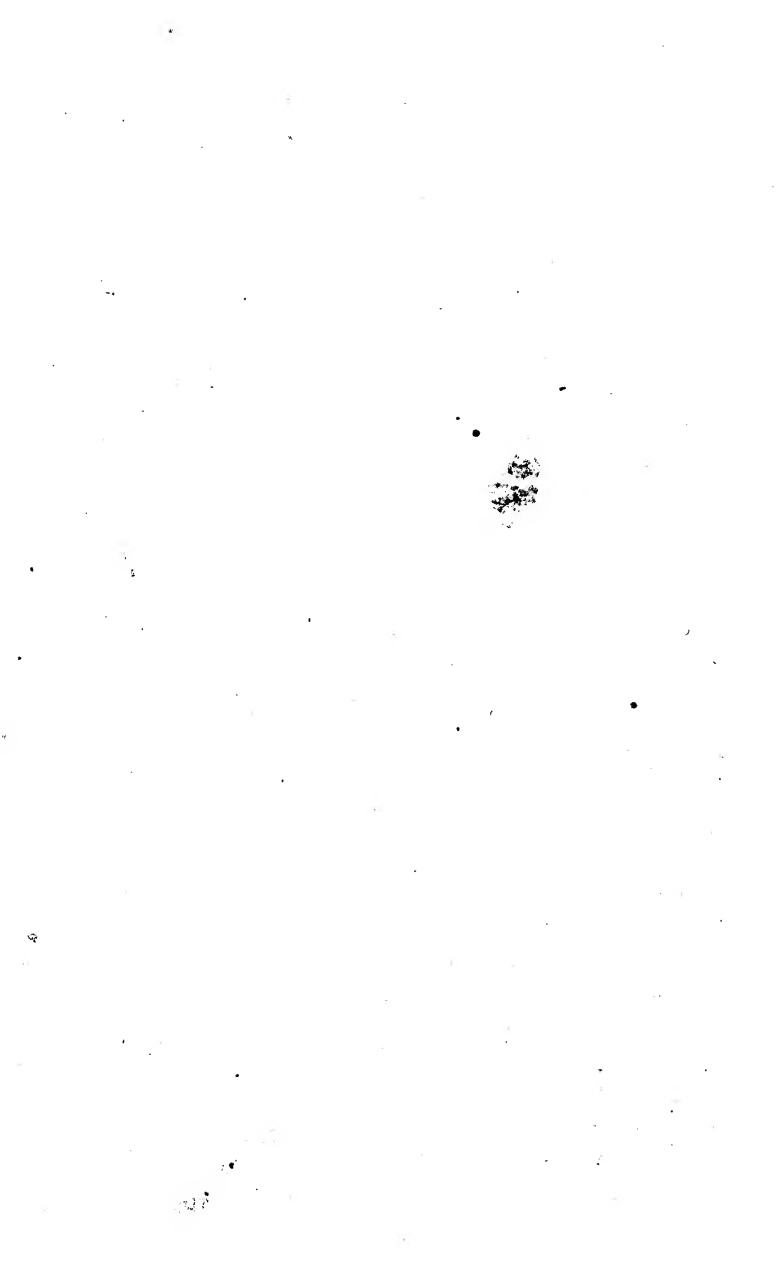
It is sometimes difficult to account for the sudden fame and popularity of some authors; but we may

rest assured that such fame can never last unless based upon a secure foundation. The homage universally, and in all ages paid to Homer as a poet, is no greater than that paid to Demosthenes as an orator. This has, no doubt, arisen from their intrinsic qualities; but much of it has, no doubt, also arisen from the known utterances of many great oracles deeply learned in classical literature, and unconsciously prejudiced in favour of old Greece; and whose voices and judgments form and sway the borrowed opinions of the many-voiced public. Those judgments also which have descended from of old have been reverently regarded by millions in their descent; and still increase in weight and interest as they receive additional responses by increasing millions of admirers. The fashions in halls and colleges thus become or influence the fashions of the literary and reading world without. If in earlier years of poetry and the arts, the greatest masters arose, it was not simply because those were the early ages, but because the developement of human genius depends greatly upon climate and scenery, society and associations; and these in Greece were favourable in early ages for the warlike rhapsodies of Homer, and in the latter days of its glory for the arousing orations of Demosthenes; and because human genius soon reaches the climax of its limited capacities which in no succeeding ages can be surpassed. Nor need we imagine that the human intellect in early ages possessed greater grasp or loftier comprehension than it does now. Originally the powers of mind of all men, are more on a level than is generally supposed. Circumstances favoured the development of genius in Homer and

Phidias, in Eschylus and Demosthenes, in Plato and Aristotle; and, hence they are by after ages baptised great, as distinguished from many, equally as great, who have had fewer opportunities for cultivation and refinement.

The convulsions and griefs amidst which so large a portion of the lives of Milton and Dante, and even of Tasso, were passed, could not repress, as we have seen, but seemed rather to give fresh wings to their genius. The early age of Milton, indeed, was more favourable for the cultivation of the muse than that of Dante. The latter lived in a darker age and among darker and fiercer spirits, and was himself of a less happy temperament than Milton. The consolations of religion, also, were wanting to sooth the natural irritation of his excited mind, driven to excess of bitterness by want and a subsistence upon charity. He possessed much of the moral daring of Milton; and a love of freedom was congenial to the minds of both. The madman's dungeon of Tasso was as melancholy an incident as can be found in the lives of either poet; and his death in the monastery of St. Onophrio in the suburbs of Rome, on the eve preceding his intended coronation with the laurel, leaves a deep and settled impression of melancholy on the mind of the susceptible reader, which time can seldom wholly efface. The lives of men of genius, indeed, seem so often chequered with lines of darkness, that the lifelong prosperity of a great original poet would be truly proverbial. The rough, warlike, political and commercial minds of the world recognise not their claims. Their productions do not directly influence the markets, or raise the price of stocks, or

subserve the interests of material utility ; and hence, the hard bargain-making sons of earth frown upon the more refined and susceptible-minded poet, as a worthless thing,—not knowing, in their profound ignorance, that the literary men of the world can do better without their patronage, than their utilitarian schemes and productions can progress without the influence and patronage of those who subsist upon the produce of literature.



ON THE THEORY OF HUMAN PERFECTIBILITY.

Nothing can be more true than the assertion, that *man is a mystery*. Great though his talents may be, and lofty though his aspirations are in all his searchings after truth, or in his imaginings after ideal good,—there is still hung around him a veil through whose folds he cannot pierce,—there still yawns around him a gulf whose depths he cannot fathom,—there still seems to be drawn around him a web of destiny through whose inextricable labyrinths he cannot wind his way to absolute perfection and happiness. Within so bounded a horizon, and without any positive knowledge of the regions beyond, it almost appears to the calm eye of reason, that the whole span of his limited existence, and the scenes and circumstances around him, united, are a mockery, a delusion, and a dream. The fervid aspirations of every mind, after the unattainable objects of imaginary bliss; and the hope,—often colored with rainbow hues, of the realization of our fancies,—though often drawing us from considering the stern realities and truths of life,—are yet, like gleams of sunshine through a cloudy sky, necessary to cheer our existence with prospects of brighter days and happier hours. A constant contemplation of what we are and have been, without those prospects of the future

illuminating all, and urging us to still greater triumphs, would benumb our faculties, freeze our passions, and turn the fair face of creation into a sterile and dreary blank, while we ourselves would seem but as bubbles tossed to and fro by an uncontrollable destiny wholly ignorant of our course.

It is certain, however, that, though ignorant of the future in its ultimate results, we can, through our knowledge of the past, so far calculate, from circumstances, the probabilities of the future, as to draw accurate outlines of events which *may* occur, and effects which *may* be produced. But, on the other hand, when unforeseen events are continually occurring, and at times seem to alter the current of all human calculation, and sage-like wisdom and experience, it were vain to expect exact fulfilment of uninspired prophecies, or an uniform procedure of irregular contingencies. When all mankind possess different minds, and are unequally agitated by varying passions and influences, and, so far as the future is concerned, seem, in some degree, the creatures of circumstances, it were vain to expect uniformity and consistency in thought and action; to expect all to obey certain fixed rules,—to operate along certain lines, or within certain impassable limits. Material laws and operations are alone subject to demonstration. Mental laws and operations, though uniform and consistent, are more subtle and evanescent; intangible in their analysis; and the subjects of conflicting conjecture more than demonstrable certainty. Hence, the deductions of all moral, partake of the fluctuations of all mental science; or, in other words, the uncertainty of all human actions, is referable to the

uncertainty and fluctuation of the minds that conceive them. And as we know that from the first progenitors of our race until now, all human minds have been alike unstable, and must, from all we can see, so continue; and that the history of past generations is but a history of the progress of mind through so many ages, we think the history of mankind through ages past, an unerring index of what man, left to his own reason and instincts, will, in all probability, be for the future.

As the human mind can only act when acted upon by other minds, and external objects and circumstances, it should necessarily be considered in relation to other minds, and the events continually occurring. Abstract qualities and principles can only be understood by tangible symbols and analogies. The powers and tendencies of the mind can only be inferred from its past achievements and present operations. The question, therefore, whether it contains within itself the seeds of perpetual progression up to ultimate perfection, is a matter of fact and argument to be deduced from history, more than any mere speculative deductions from the nature of mind itself.

The theological opponents of the doctrine of human perfectibility will find little difficulty in demolishing the theories of Turgot, Condorcet, and Madame de Stael. Drawing their weapons immediately from the Bible, they at once dispose of every argument for man's perfectibility and ultimate happiness being developed upon earth, through moral and philosophical means alone, as the mere visions of unholy and insane imaginations. We admit that

to the divine authority we must bow ; and that to all inspired declarations we should pay due reverence and regard ; but when the arguments in favour of perfectibility, are founded and supported apart from scripture authority,—are, in fact independent speculations of reason,—we think they should be allowed to stand or fall on their own grounds of evidence and truth. So long as scripture is untouched in our free and philosophical researches, why should it be brought forth as a judge to decide upon questions foreign to its spirit and principles, or, at least, distinct from the scope and tenor of its high and sacred decisions ? Much, we are aware, of the moral philosophy, or ethics, which reign dominant in our colleges, and which some conceive to be independent speculations of the human mind, have been drawn from the inspired page ; but in all these reasonings we find a code of principles laid down as fundamental and binding upon the conscience ; and clearly showing,—when contrasted with the crude moral doctrines of heathen sages,—that it has been directly drawn from the pure fountain of God's word. Thus, when Lord Herbert of Cherbury decried the light of the Gospel as superfluous, he was walking in the reflected light of its revelations, and drawing the very weapons of his argumentative warfare from the armoury of heaven. So the doctrine of reciprocal rights and duties, or relative obligations throughout society, or of doing unto others as we would wish others to do unto us, which forms the foundation of all systems of speculative morals, has alone been found clearly and emphatically set forth in scripture. With regard to

the French doctrine of man's perfectibility, however, no code of morals is enunciated which can in the least startle the lovers of truth, or convey the impression that scripture has been successfully attacked, or in any degree superseded. The reasonings of such philosophers have been entirely harmless, though ingenious, and in many points so clearly refute themselves, as, at once, to be both the bane and the antidote.

That the world is in a progressive state cannot be denied ; but whether that progress has been such from the first creation of our race as to warrant us in alleging that it has been continual and uninterrupted through all time, is the question which requires solution, and must determine the nature of the conclusion. If the student of history can find evidence of such progression in the whole range of his subjects, the theory may seem tenable ; but if there be found a break in the line of its continuity,—an eclipse of its advancing glories by the shadows of a ruder barbarism hanging over and blighting it, the whole will lose its plausibility and its only basis of apparent truth. Or if the moralist and political economist insist upon the truth of the theory and fail to show why the universal code of conscience binding man to man by sacred ties and obligations ; and why the laws, literature and philosophy of nations, as directing the currents of civilization, have all been abortive in producing the grand results of perfectibility, then must he also forego his tenacious hold of the doctrine. Or if the metaphysician, in his subtle analysis of mental phenomena, has ever detected the latent seeds of

perfection lurking within its mysterious folds, which he can prove that time and circumstances alone can mature,—then may he also speculate upon the probable issues of the future in the elevation of man;—but as his knowledge of all human minds must necessarily flow from an innate knowledge of his own mental powers and emotions,—from his own mind alone he must prove the existence of some hitherto undiscovered germ or faculty of higher civilization; and if failing to do so must necessarily allow his whole fabric to perish.

The dreams of a golden age so current among the fables of the ancient world, when innocence and happiness among the nomadic, or pastoral, races of the earth, reigned over all; and flocks and herds, instead of current coins, formed the wealth of infant nations, and the commodities of kingly traffic, can never again recur in this advanced age of the world. Still, the human mind, as if longing for a foretaste of supernal bliss, and an earthly realization of its infinitude, aspires to a state of more positive happiness. By whatever object man is attracted; or with whatever spiritual or material aliment he may attempt to fill up the craving void of his mind, the one great aim of the whole is happiness and expansion. In quest of that he wanders, labours, and endures disappointment after disappointment,—confident, that if he even does not find the precious pearl on earth, he will find it in some other region; and at last dies without gaining the object of his ambitious search. It does not alone exist in the breasts of kings and conquerors, statesmen, poets, and philosophers; the desire is indigenous to the soil of every mind, and

breathes in the aspirations of the plebeian, as well as the patrician ; in the hovel, as well as the palace. Its deep foundations are not alone laid in the ideal republic of Plato,—the Utopia of More,—the new Atlantis of Bacon,—the Eldorado of Raleigh, or the New Moral World of Owen. It breathes through the universal literaturê of nations, and is the central point of human existence, to which all spiritual life and motion ever gravitates. The atheist seeks it in denying the being and attributes of a God ; and the Christian in offering up his incense on the altar of love. The philosopher seeks it in the investigation of the most recondite truths ; and the Mahommedan in his ignorance, blindly submitting to the imaginary decrees of fate. It is sought for in the revolutions of dynasties, and the wars of nations ; in the speculations of dreamers, the enactment of laws, and the spread of commerce ; in the growth and diffusion of literature ; and in the glorious dawn expected to break upon the benighted world, through the influence of that refined, sentimental, but false philosophy which shone amidst the volcanic eruptions of revolutionary France, through the speculations of Turgot, Condorcet, and afterwards by M. de Stael ; and partially in our own country, by Godwin, in his “ Political Justice.” The golden age of the ancient world was one of pastoral simplicity and innocence, unembittered by dissension and war, and the many drawbacks to happiness found in a state of progressive civilization, and among the marts of manufacture and commerce. The perfectibility of the French philosophers is to flow from the triumphs of civilization over the rude elements of barbarism,—the ascendancy of justice

and truth over tyranny and error,—the elevation of the minds of all through the prevalence of literature and philosophy, to a just knowledge of the consequences of human actions; and the general desire which will then exist, in every grade of society, so to act, that the rules or laws of social happiness and virtue may not be infringed to cause dissension and bitterness in the earthly paradise.

Whether this theory is ever likely to be realized in practice through the influence of literature and science alone, we think extremely questionable, and shall here consider it in a few of its many aspects, without trenching, however upon the doubtful and contested questions of politics, or polemics, or attempting to excite party feelings or prejudices.

Our earliest introduction to profane history is through the Homeric ballads. But the nature of the events there narrated, and the mythological absurdities interwoven with the more natural machinery of the story, throws so improbable an air over the whole, as at once to prove it more fabulous than real. From that period downward to the date of the first Olympiad, 776 years before Christ, when the narrative begins to assume a more connected form, all the successive steps of Grecian history are the same. Fact is lost in fable. Truth is lost in extravagant romance. After the first chronological era, and for several ages downwards, the whole history, though bearing a more dignified and sober carriage, and amidst all its Herodotean marvels, more consistent with natural operations and events, is still of so dubious a character as to raise suspicions regarding its truth and fidelity. So long, in fact, as clear and

irrefragable testimony is wanting to substantiate the wondrous statements set forth, little faith can be placed in their veracity,—and all readers of Grecian history are aware,—without travelling so far back as the Pelasgic, or Argonautic periods,—that no clear undoubted testimony exists, of the reality, so prominently set forth, of some features of the Lycurgan era of the Lacedemonean state. The whole of the earlier Grecian, indeed, like that of the Roman history from the days of Romulus and Remus, and the founding of Rome, is replete with the marvellous and improbable,—the features shaded with much of the dark, the undefined, and the romantic,—and yet the light which issued from its early literature, and fragmentary philosophy, as the first-born and freshest in the world, is so imposing and attractive, as often to captivate the reader, and pledge him almost insensibly to a tacit belief in all that is told.

In looking back, however, from Greece and Rome to Assyria and Egypt, India and China, and other nations claiming a high degree of antiquity, the question is, whether those nations displayed so much of juvenile immaturity in the sciences of law and government, the arts of war and conquest, sculpture and architecture, as to warrant the conclusion, that they were less intellectual and inventive than the Greeks at the periods of their greatest originality and splendour; or less masculine than the Romans in their Augustan age of universal conquest and classic elegance. Doubtless, with increase of years, there is, in most cases, increase of wisdom through experience. The dawn of civilization in Greece followed that of the more remote nations mentioned. Yet

the Greeks created by their own salient and inventive genius all the literature which, as, a perennial fountain, has watered all lands with its classic streams,—all the arts of painting and architecture, sculpture and grace, which reflect to modern ages the light and glory of those days when Demosthenes thundered and Aristotle taught. And certainly the Greeks, when, thus, forming themselves into a distinct people, and founding their state, had but a dreamy conception of other nations, to them half fabulous; were destitute of models to imitate,—experienced leaders to direct and guide them,—or ennobling laws, drawn from established codes, to mould their opinions; so that they were the architects of their own greatness,—the cradled giants, who, yet in their infancy, reared the pillars of their own independence and imperishable renown. What Greece was, Rome was emulous to become. What Greece possessed, Rome, victorious, either plundered or borrowed. Less delicate and feminine, and more iron in her constitution,—less literary and philosophic, and more warlike in her habits and customs, as she conquered the world, than Greece;—the decayed monuments of her power and glory, still teaching lessons of wisdom and vanity from her seven-hilled city,—scathed with the burning vials of Almighty wrath,—tell emphatically, but painfully, what was the might of her sons, in the days of her palmiest magnificence and unconquered strength. If Rome, therefore, borrowed from Greece, and if Greece founded empire and its commanding characteristics without assistance from other states or models drawn from the peoples of more ancient dynasties, surely those more ancient

nations which preceded it in civilization, and which during its infancy still flourished in colossal strength and splendour, must have been equally as inventive, and in earlier days have displayed as great intellectual ascendancy as the Greeks in all their eminence. Proofs, indeed, we have but few, if any, from profane literary remains, of any intellectual supremacy ever existing among the Chaldean, Assyrian, or Egyptian empires; but neither have we, prior to the Augustan age, much literature or philosophy to indicate the mental superiority of the Romans. If we may credit tradition, astronomy was cultivated at Babylon, and the observations registered on bricks, more than two thousand years before Christ. And, humanly speaking, does the Hebrew literature of the earliest ages shew anything like intellectual infancy? Moses was born in, and, according to Scripture, was learned in all the learning of Egypt, then, we may infer from this remark alone, the most learned of existing nations, as, two hundred years previous, during the government of Joseph, it was one of the most civilized. And; so far as external evidence from the characters of those governments,—the magnificence of their capitals and courts, can testify to the existence of mental vigour and strength, we have no reason to imagine that the ancient peoples of Asia and Egypt were lower in the scale of intellectual power than the Greeks, or the Greeks than ourselves of the present day. Though, therefore, the human mind may have improved in sagacity through many ages of experience, it has not been accumulating native strength and power.

When Greece was still in her infancy, her people

wondered at the gorgeous descriptions given by travellers of the glories of Egypt, the merchandise of Tyre,—the ships of Tarshish, and the gold of Sheba; nor less at the extent of Thebes, the splendours of Babylonian riches and manufacture, the vastness of Nineveh, and the labour and architecture of the Egyptian pyramids. Those cities and nations were to pass away; their decline of greatness and external glory to be perceptible when Greece and Rome were rising in power and reflecting their light to far distant ages. The hand of ruin was drawing its sepulchral shadows over each successive cycle of their history, and the stern despot, Time, was striding triumphant over crumbling temple and tower. They progressed and filled their allotted span up to its culminating point, and then gradually vanished from the horizon of nations. Their moral, like their national history, reads us a powerful lesson, and tells us a thrilling tale.

Nor is it, alone, the voiceless solitudes, the riven arches, and broken columns,—the mouldering towers, temples, and eternal pyramids, which tell us of glory departed, power overthrown and extinguished, and strength, once deemed impregnable, shattered in ruin. The suggestions awakened are more imposing than the ruins themselves. Leaving for a time the wilds of nature, where we can more freely commune with the eternal, we conjure up before us in those regions of desolation all the living associations, which for centuries emanated from, and gathered around the tides of human beings ebbing and flowing through their mighty gates. They then dreamt not, any more than we do now of the probable fate of our

own, of the falling asunder of their mighty capitals and empires, but exulted in their fancied security, as they surveyed the massive walls and pinnacled towers,—like eternal giants, defying time; and thought, perchance, that such fabrics, like the everlasting mountains, would survive the wreck of other nations, and end only with time itself. Then amidst the humless solitudes, broken only by the howl of the jackal and the hiss of the serpent, we muse over the fickleness of all earthly power and pursuits, and the vanity of all human ambition. What pulses beat,—what hearts throbbed,—what high aspirations, winged by the spirit of ambition, darting into the future, have been associated around those colossal but frowning ruins! There all the emotions that ever swelled the human breast with rapture, or melted it with love, or tore it with agonizing passion, or paralysed it with iron despair, found free vent and ample theatre for expression and action! There we cannot but think of crimson crimes appealing to heaven for vengeance,—of a long and desolating course of guilt and debauchery, consuming the vitals, and sapping the foundations of the empires and their capitals, until shaken as if by some terrible earthquake-like violence, they fell from the proud pedestal of their magnificence, and vanished from the map of living nations! Where, amidst all these heaps of crumbling bricks, and granite and drifting dust, can we distinguish the dust of kings and queens, courtiers or warriors, from the dust of the slaves who dragged their chariot wheels, or suffered death in the moments of their capricious tyranny? Perishable and fleeting thus are all mortal greatness, beauty, glory, and re-

noun! But it was not fate, with unintermitting strokes,—to which we too often transfer our ideas of decay and change,—which shattered asunder the greatness and blasted the hopes and prospects of those peoples:—the elements of destruction were inherent in themselves, and, like Samson in the temple of Dagon, they drew down upon their own heads the sweeping retribution which destroyed them.

If, therefore, progress of society, intellectual enlargement, and moral elevation and happiness, were, according to the framers of the theory of perfectibility, to be uninterrupted through all time, and among all nations and races,—why this utter wreck of empires, and extinction of peoples? Why, instead of advancement from a lower to a higher point, this retrogression or rather sinking of all the arts of progressive civilization? this rushing backward into “chaos and old night,” after gaining the light of a nobler day? Why this regurgitation of the stream to its fountain head, instead of rolling onward, and refreshing the parched desert with its living waters? Alas! nothing was abiding. Nothing was uninterruptedly progressing. “’Twas revolution all.”

We often confound the periods of greatest national advancement in power and conquest, with the greatest existing amount of happiness to the greatest number of people, forgetting that where through despotism, national monuments and temples have arisen, it has almost invariably been through the expenditure of the muscles and liberties of the people; and that in all cases, barbarian magnificence has been marked with the curse of tyranny and intellectual prostration. The enslaved children of the chosen house of Israel,

assisted in rearing the pyramids of Egypt; Jewish captives, when they hung their harps upon the willows, cemented with tears the wondrous walls of Babylon, and swelled the current of the Euphrates; slaves dragged the chariot wheels of tyrants; slaves and slavery existed in the most refined days of ancient kingdoms and courts,—swelled the numbers of the admiring rabble at the heels of Pericles, and waited upon Aspasia at supper; and in the palmiest days of Rome, were kept in subjection by the reception of supplies of corn from the granaries of the empire. In this respect the lapse of ages brought no change. Power has always been used to trample and crush. In ancient times slaves formed part of the common population, and were of the same colour, and spoke the same language as their taskmasters. European bondsmen, however oppressed under a mock freedom, are not now, in the same sense, slaves. But look backward for nearly three thousand years, and say,—has the progress of time and civilization changed the heart of man with regard to his right of holding property in man? Mark even human progress since the great ameliorating principles of the gospel have been shed abroad, and say, whether in the most civilized kingdoms, and in republics boasting of freedom above other states, the inhuman principles of holding man as the property of his fellow man, have not been most broadly and unequivocally advocated, and most unblushingly and cruelly practised. Britain has, through her legislature, washed her escutcheon from the stain of negro blood. Ask the United States of America whether she has made the same advance in the path of per-

fectibility, and struck the tyrant's chain from her millions of slaves.

Seldom, however, have the triumphs of intellect and the march of civilization been united to a corresponding advance of moral excellence. In all times the fact has been proved that a state of adversity, which often promotes humility, has been best calculated to foster the moral virtues; and that continued prosperity, in both individuals and communities, begets pride and arrogance, the forerunners and co-partners of despotism and crushing tyranny. The histories of all nations uninfluenced by Christianity clearly show, that in every case of every people upon whom the curse of retributive justice has fallen, the extinction of the moral virtues prepared the way. When Nineveh fell from its pedestal of greatness; and when Cyrus turned the stream of the Euphrates from its course, and executed the decreed vengeance of heaven upon the guilty king and court of Babylon, —the peoples, like their rulers, were sunk in sloth and debauchery, dreaming in their citadels of fancied security that they should see no sorrow. So was it with Athens after the death of Socrates, and the division of the Macedonian kingdom, when the shifting sands of empire began to heave from the Ilissus to the Tiber. So was it with Rome after the age of Augustus, when the blood of the saints was shed, and her once commanding sceptre was devoured by her own inherent canker. And so it was with Egypt when Cæsar triumphed over the chastity of Cleopatra, and the young Octavius crowned the conquest at Actium, and, after the death of the Queen overthrew the monarchy.

Intellectual, therefore, is not necessarily allied to moral greatness in either individuals or communities of such; and he who would affirm that the world has marched onward from its earliest epoch, in one continued line of intellectual, moral, and social progress, affirms it in the face of the accumulated testimony of the world itself in favour of the opposite doctrine. Let such enter the ruins of Thebes, and preach such doctrines from the temple of Karnak. Let him stand upon the sandheaps, and hillocks of crumbling bricks, bitumen and mortar, by the banks of the Euphrates or the Tigris, and preach perpetual progress and stability. Let his voice echo to the footsteps of ages among the columns of Paestum, the decayed temples of Athens and Palmyra, and the Colliseum of Rome,—or by the once glorious Jerusalem on the hill Calvary, and proclaim aloud to the world that men and nations have from the beginning been in a state of uninterrupted progress to ultimate perfection and happiness on earth.

The advocates of perfectibility, however, anxious to overleap the obstacle presented by the decay of ancient nations, attempt to argue that their rise and fall was, in reality, no hindrance to the world's advance. They rose and flourished. And as in the decay of the plant, the seed it bears is scattered by the winds to take root and vegetate in other soils, they argue, that the seeds of ancient civilization were, in the decay of states, scattered to other parts of the globe, destined, in succeeding ages, to bring forth a more rich and exuberant harvest of civilization.

We would not attempt to undervalue the influence of ancient literature, and its refinement on modern

society in Europe, but we think this argument a mere shirking of the question. We are told that all European nations are still indebted to Greece and Rome for their poetry, their polite literature, and philosophy ; for the free spirit of inquiry that pervades our institutions, and the unquenchable fire of liberty that glows in every bosom. Allowing this to be true, it may be asked,—have the intellectual fountains of Greece and Rome fed the human intellect, and produced our present civilization without extraneous power from another source ?

After the dawn of Christianity, when a mighty impetus was given to the moral advancement of its disciples, and its principles seemed in many respects triumphant, there was room for expecting a deep and permanent renovation of society. Yet it is certain, that, though for a season it did wondrously advance, the elements opposing it were, humanly speaking, of more than equal strength and threw barriers all but insurmountable in its way. And when it partially emerged from the fires and dungeons of persecution, and, under the care of Constantine, was united to the state, the limits of its exercise were circumscribed, but a small portion of mankind were aware of its nature and influence ; and, thus, even the progress likely to spring from its transforming principles, seemed far from universal, or, even where it existed among contending currents, so far from being universally salutary, that the perfectibility of mankind was but little nearer its consummation. But had the triumphs of Christianity been ten times greater, its grand transforming truths and principles did not spring from the scat-

tered seeds of ancient civilization ; and hence its influence upon society, during the first six centuries of its existence, cannot, according to the theories of the French philosophers, be reckoned among the elements of necessary progress, developed in the grand scheme of human perfectibility.

The irruptions of the mingled hordes of northern barbarians into the Roman empire,—its downfall and dismemberment, and the disastrous eclipse which thence overspread, like a funeral pall, all the trophies of civilized life and the triumphs of Christianity, would of itself seem sufficient to overthrow all reasoning in favour of the theory. But this signal stagnation of all advancement of society,—this successive uprising of cloud after cloud over scenes of desolation and blood,—this mixture of races, of Huns, and Goths, and Vandals, with the warmer blood and more vivacious temperament of the natives of the south,—this union of natures so obviously opposite, and the unnatural springing up between them, and producing its monstrous spawn of ghostly tyranny and superstition of the Centaur of Christendom, miscalled the church,—all, according to this theory, are considered as ranking among the principal causes of the [improvements in Europe during the last six centuries. Nations, our theorists contend, after running their destined cycles, become enervated and retrogressive ; and that, before a new impulse in a forward career can be given them, amalgamation with other races must, by the transfusion of blood take place ; and hence, they conclude, that the union of Scythians and Italians, after the crumbling down of the Romish power, produced a

prodigious improvement in both races. Instead, therefore, of considering Attila the 'scourge of God,' as has long been customary, executing the vengeance of heaven upon a doomed and guilty people, he and his savages should be considered, as conferring, amidst their bloody orgies, wreck of cities, and awful destruction of life, blessings in embryo upon continental nations, to be reaped many centuries afterwards in a golden harvest of learning, science, and progressive civilization.

If, therefore, ancient learning and refinement scattered abroad, were but the seeds from which more rich and enduring fruits were to spring, we may consider the dismemberment of the Roman empire, and the union of foreign races, the rise and triumph of Mahommedanism in Arabia,—its rapid spread over some of the fairest regions of Asia,—and the universal darkness which settled over the nations of Europe for so many ages, as the fruits of those seeds, transplanted from ancient classic lands and civilized cities. Certain that the nine centuries of Gothic darkness previous to the reformation is a fatal bar to the success of their doctrines, the advocates of the theory dextrously endeavour to evade it by urging that such anarchy and darkness were the necessary consequence of the blending of races,—the convulsion necessarily preceding the permanent dawn of a nobler epoch. Hence, this happy darkness they find subservient to their views in three particular points. In the first place,—it is the effect or fruit of the seeds sown during, or immediately succeeding, the periods of ancient civilization. In the second place,—it is the effect of the necessary blend-

ing of opposing races for the production of a higher civilization. And, in the third place, as naturally flowing from the preceding, it is affirmed that the sacred fires of learning and philosophy which seemed quenched in night, were only obscured for a season, that, like the sun under a veil of supernatural darkness, they might emerge from their chaos, and produce, by their long suppressed power and influence, a far richer and more luxuriant civilization. In the last point they allude to the rise of the schoolmen—the Provencal bards, and the general springing up of a more extended inquiry among all classes.

Allowing, however, that when the scholastic philosophers arose, they evinced high skill as dialecticians, it must be granted that they exhibited a superabundance of credulity in choosing their subjects, and that their reasonings and conclusions were often imbecile and absurd. The followers, afar off, of the Bishop of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, were but mere tyros in true philosophy. They knew little and proved little in their endless logomachies. From their cradles, like all other human beings, they had acted more or less upon the principles of induction; but, ignorant of the proper method of applying them in searching after truth, they forsook the pathway of legitimate inquiry and vainly attempted to solve unfathomable problems, and failed in their avowed object of elucidating truth.

To assert, therefore, that during the long slumber of the middle ages, the minds of Europe were, though in a hidden manner, alive but inactive; and that when the schoolmen arose, they evinced a pro-

digious progress over the ancients, is a mere gratuitous assumption. It would be difficult to prove, that, had the Roman empire *not* fallen asunder, and the consequent sleep of ages overspread Europe, the minds of the population, when the schoolmen arose and learning began to revive, would not have been more enlightened, and their inquiries, and their mode of conducting them been more calculated to produce a richer harvest of fruit. To start upon a higher career, and display more prominently its faculties and energies, the human mind requires no such lengthened slumber. When tyrannized over, —when suppressed in its soarings and outpourings by superstitious bigotry, and an inquisitorial censorship, it may give way for a season, as did that of Galileo ; but, like the bent elastic spring, it will burst forth with all its native energy when free from the pressure of the superincumbent weight. But for this the lapse of ages is not necessary. The disputations of the early fathers of the church show as deep a knowledge of the art of reasoning and subtlety of discrimination, as the logomachies of the schoolmen, after the deluge of barbarism had swept nearly all learning and literature out of Europe. And were the minds of Plato and Aristotle less distinguished for imaginative richness and grandeur, acuteness and subtlety, depth and comprehension, than those of Origen and Augustine.

We do not presumptuously attempt to depreciate the claims of the schoolmen. Except a few colossal remnants, the old literature of the ancients had sunk amidst the chaos of nations ; and a new literature had to be created, and a new language spoken and

immortalized. Dante, in his own country, proved its flexibility and strength; and the schoolmen then laid the foundation, though they did not rear the superstructure, of a purer reasoning; and even to the present day, the effect produced by their war of words is felt. If we may credit Roger Ascham,—during that period, there existed a marvellous thirst for knowledge in villages and towns. Then also were the foundations of many of our academical institutions laid: On all sides there seemed to be a revival of the sleeping embers of thought, and the beginning of an onward progress. This was the natural course of things after the resuscitation of mind: but we cannot conceive how this long slumber was necessary to prepare it for a more original and independent course of action. It at all times, like the body, acquires strength and energy from action; and like the body, requires rest and repose. Instead, therefore, of considering the mediæval ages of Europe as producing a necessary lull in the actions of the human mind to fit it for higher action, there is every reason to think, that had those centuries of slumber been actively improved in drawing forth and diffusing higher intellectual knowledge and true philosophy, the prophets of human perfectibility might, when they broached their theories, have found them nearer a practical consummation.

In looking back to the spread of philosophy and Christianity, in their loftier aspects since the reformation, and the rise of Bacon, we at once perceive how the truth has been diffused, after being properly apprehended; and in what light the labours of the schoolmen have been held by inductive enquirers,

and undisguised believers in the Gospel. Had their researches, as displayed in their visionary attempts at solving incomprehensible problems, been favourable to the advance of science and religion, would the followers of Bacon have discarded them, or the great authors of the reformation have opposed and overturned them? But many causes were at work, breaking up the old time-worn incrustations of society, and preparing the way for a reproduction of all its elements in a nobler form, and upon more enduring foundations. From the entrance of the Greek refugees into Italy,—the productions of Dante and the Provencal bards,—the discovery of the mariner's compass, the continent of America, and wondrous regions there displayed,—the discovery of gunpowder, and the manufacture of paper,—but above all, and yet in conjunction with them, the uses of the newly invented printing press;—from all these causes the sluggish minds of Europe received a shock, and from the great collision sprung forward, more able to perceive their profound ignorance and baffle its efforts. Then the printing press with its Briarean arms, brought success to the cause of the reformation, and riveted the attention of millions upon high and sacred questions, buried amidst the rubbish of early controversy and superstition since the apostolic age. The dawn of a brighter era had commenced. The seeds of a nobler perfection, long under ground, were now putting forth their blossoms, and though cradled in the storm and rocked by the whirlwind, destined to rear their branches, laden with immortal fruit in regions more celestial and sublime.

But periods of great convulsion are always distinguished by the ascendancy of master minds, which seem as if spontaneously cast up to lead the movement and impress their genius indelibly upon society. Bacon thus followed Luther, and amidst ignorance, prejudice, and error, planted the keystone of that philosophic arch, over which succeeding generations should pass to the temple of science and truth. Then arose Shakspeare with the key of the passions in his hand, the lightning of truth in his mental eye, reading the universal heart of man, and fixing before the world, as if in eternal brass, its varying phases and characteristics. Then arose Spenser, the child of allegory and romance, with the muse of many coloured wings; and nearly coeval with them arose Machiavel and Tasso, the glory and yet the shame of Florence and of Italy,—the starry Galileo, and the facetious Montaigne.

From the period of Bacon downwards, the impulse given to science has been felt more or less throughout the world. Being confined, in its material benefits, mostly to Europe and the colonial possessions of European powers, it certainly, in all its scope, cannot claim universality. Nor, even in our own country, where it is most advanced, does it exercise that elevating power over the human mind, which many, *a priori* would anticipate. There are deteriorating effects, which spring from the popularization of science, and more recondite knowledge, which go far to prove that mind, even under the most favourable circumstances, cannot move onward to perfection.

When original inventions and discoveries are brought forth, and astonish, and even perplex by

their magnitude and utility the master minds that produced them, but little is left to future followers in the same track, but the exposition and enforcement of ascertained truths, and the practical application of beneficial doctrines. St. Paul and St. Peter enunciated no new doctrines. The thorough inductive method of Bacon has never been superseded. Newton is yet the acknowledged discoverer of the most profound and universal truths of physical science. Hobbes and Locke laid the foundations of the more recent schools of metaphysics. Their followers have merely transplanted their doctrines, expounded their principles, and published the results in various disguises and with copious illustrations. Following immediately after, political and ecclesiastical information, through their many avenues of transmission, have swelled the stream of knowledge, and hastened human progress, and borne man nearer the goal of his anticipated perfection. Every convulsion,—every revolution,—every war of opinions and principles, has been productive of great results. The conflicts preceding and immediately following the commonwealth and the English revolution,—the wars of the Fronde, and the volcanic revolution in France, were events and epochs from which rapid progress of the peoples of those countries may be dated. In thinking for themselves they naturally sought after knowledge; and in proportion as they have advanced in knowledge, have their opinions and their voices been heard and respected by their rulers. And now, through their interference none, all seems in a state of progress. Science and literature, like an intellectual deluge, sweep over the land. Philo-

sophy, which to the mass is a forbidding term, is now popularized. Poetry and *belles lettres* attract the attention of all. Colleges may still have exclusive tests, but colleges are only for the few. The walls of literary despotism are crumbling down,—the great landmarks of bigotry and prejudice are defaced. Philanthropy has unfurled its standard. Liberality of sentiment, and the practical adoption of mighty emancipating principles of truth, have enlightened, and tended to cause millions of minds to rejoice. Under our humanizing laws we see slavery abolished—the exclusive tests of party in a great measure overthrown—trade free from restrictive monopolies—war disarmed of half its ferocity—capital punishments all but expunged from the statute book—and a wider and deeper range of feeling and affection partially breaking down the old barriers of caste and social tyranny and proscription.

We are apt to forget, however, in contemplating our own advancement and greatness, that the amelioration of which we boast, is confined within narrow bounds, and that beyond our own country and France, parts of Germany, and America, and a few more favoured portions of the earth, the great mass of mankind are either stationary or retrogressive. An infinite progression to perfectibility, as previously mentioned, involves a necessary and uninterrupted progression. Have either ancient or modern nations so advanced? Are the dusky hordes of India in a state of perpetual progression? Are the hundreds of millions in China, partially repelling all inducement to a higher civilization, necessarily advancing? Turkey and Egypt, indeed, are at present slightly

moved ;—but what grounds have we for expecting that the vast continent of Western Africa will start from its immobility and move uninterruptedly onward to civilization and perfection ?

But even supposing that science and learning should, when universally understood and applied, ameliorate the natural condition of our race, in what degree would such knowledge affect their moral and social condition ? The marvellous excellence of steamships and railroads, and the utility of machinery carried so high, as in a great measure to supersede human labour in some departments of travel and industry, may, in some minds, induce the belief, that science will ultimately conquer all natural imperfections, and that the results of knowledge will have a beneficial effect on the side of a refined humanity. But does scientific perfection, even if that could be attained, necessarily involve moral perfection, or, in other words, has its progress always been attended by a corresponding increase of morality ? Some of most distinguished philosophers have been as noted for their hatred of all religion and their want of humanity, as for their greatness of talent and genius. Some of our brightest literary stars have been paragons of vice. In truth, we frequently find, in the largest towns, and among the most refined classes, where we naturally look for the nearest approaches to perfectibility, vice and debauchery, seduction and ruin, as prominent as among the lower classes.

Again, we find, though true civilization is considered friendly to peace and progress, that the most civilized peoples and governments are as apt to plunge into war as the most ignorant and savage.

The alleged violation of some unimportant treaty, or an imagined insult to an ambassador, and through him to the government he represents, has often been the pretext for plunging nations into sanguinary wars, the rulers being, meanwhile, often the most refined and learned of their race. There are those who delight in warfare, despite the sufferings and the horrors it creates, or the many degrees it may be throwing the world back from greater approaches to perfectibility. When schools have been established to teach it as an art and practise it upon a mimic scale,—raising imaginary fortifications—casting imaginary trenches, and sapping imaginary walls, can we wonder that men of talent and fitting education should desire to practise it in reality and upon a greater scale? Who can wonder if, with great standing armies at command, and facilities for extensive operations ever ready, wily statesmen and ambitious soldiers should long for the tented field, the concussion of arms, and the shouts of victory? And surely if the spread of civilization, and a thorough and practical knowledge of the horrors of war, could prevent our own and neighbouring nations from indulging in it, Great Britain and France with all their boasted wisdom and experience might be expected to shun it for ever. Yet the opposite of this is the case.

Nations, in fact, as nations have no knowledge of humility. The higher their elevation in the scale of civilized states, the more determined they seem to make others respect their opinions, and bend to their mandates. Intolerance is not the produce of ignorance alone, but will be found as indigenous to

the soil of learning and civilization. In truth, broils and contentions are as common among the learned and ingenious, as among the vulgar and the rude. Men of ability will think for themselves; and if one phase of perfectibility be uniformity in sentiment and unity in action, it will be as vain to seek such coincidence among kings and statesmen, as among mechanics and farmers. It is to be said that perfectibility may exist without uniformity of opinion regarding any creed, or object, or subject of speculation, then we argue that such is impossible, because inconsistent with human nature.

Ages of peace, also, when dreamers might expect the dawn of a millennial perfectibility, are fraught with their own peculiar evils. During war men's minds are full and feverish with excitement; and for a time the more social affections seem crushed by the pressure of public affairs. Peace afterwards seems a narcotic. The public mind is but little engrossed with any excitable object, and ranges more at random. The passions are less concentrated and more prone to wander. Irregularity and destruction often occur. A community having thus few common points of attraction, or motives for united action, will seldom display a reciprocity of feeling; and amidst this tameness of public affairs, society, though essentially one, is split into divisions. Local factions are created. Parties and partizanship usurp the place of patriotism. Each is great in his little circle,—vain of his fancied superiority, and determined, like Diogenes, to suffer none to stand between him and the sun. The differences thus created, and the bad feelings excited, foster a coldness, a diffidence, and a

want of deferential respect, subversive of all social happiness, and promotive of the most narrow-minded selfishness.

If it be affirmed that political organization has always indicated a state of progression, we would beg to ask whether that has always been the case in China, in Turkey, Egypt, and other Mahometan states, and among the Hindoos, whose laws of *caste* have erected, more or less, barriers against all successful movement towards social and political amelioration? Nay, we may even go a step further and ask, whether political organization in some of the states of Euproe, boasting of some civilization, has always been progressive? Are Russian serfs less crushed,—or is Russian freedom greater than during the reign of Peter the Great? Is social freedom under Austrian rule progressive? Is Italian independence advancing? In all these countries there is indeed motion, but little advancement. When expediency, and not political justice, reigns predominant in the cabinets of kings and statesmen, we may rest assured that the advancement of the people is an object but seldom entertained; and that the standard of perfectibility, according to them, is their placid subjection to the ruling powers, rather than their moral and intellectual elevation.

We are aware that there are evils which no governments or laws can cause or cure. Kings and governments are not the creators of evil, though often acting unjustly and tyrannically. The evil elements pervading them, pervade all alike. So long as the laws of a nation mark the mind and morals of a nation, the people, whoever be the rulers, reflect

and embody those laws. Men, therefore, in their individual capacities, and society, as an aggregate of such, must work out their own civilization. When men do nothing, and expect government to do everything, the complex machinery of society will stop or revolve backwards. The people not only form the basis of the great social pyramid, but possess the power which moves it; and in proportion as the members in every point of the scale strive to surpass their brethren in high and virtuous achievements, will the apex of the gigantic superstructure, adorned with the diadem of royalty and the sceptre of real power, appear more noble and magnificent.

What are termed the natural evils of the world arising in a great measure from causes over which we have no control, affect us but little. The moral evil pervading and permeating all human hearts,—all human affairs and institutions, and casting a deadly blight over society wherever existing, defies alike the empiricism of the politician, and the quack salve of the mere artificial moralist, because wholly uneradicable by mere human means. The world is growing old, and history and tradition tell us that of old human nature was the same; and what features does it present still in this most enlightened of countries and ages? Look, we would say, to the abysses of iniquity—the sloughs of pollution in which so many thousands of our fellow beings, boasting of civilization, and dreaming of perfectibility, still wallow! Look to the ground which imposture covers—which infidelity and atheism usurp! Look to the debauchee revelling in his sensuality—the harlot in her den of loathsome

iniquity—the swearer uttering his imprecations—the drunkard rolling in the streets—and the sabbath-breaker desecrating the sanctity of the sacred day! Look to the gaming table and the victims of its dire hallucinations! Go to the race course—go to the theatre—go to the masquerade, and see whether amidst the number of their votaries one will be found to whom, in a spiritual sense, the lightning of truth flashes not in vain! Go to their deluded votaries, and drawing back the curtain of fashion from their brazen front, and holding up the divine standard of moral truth to their view, and estimating the virtue of their actions by its measurement, see how pure virtue denuded of the mask of hypocrisy is a mere phantom; whilst guilt, disease, and pollution, throned in splendour upon her ruins, assume externally the guise and semblance of truth, and with the song of the syren and the poison of the serpent, lead, through their multiform fascinations, thousands to spiritual death and despair! Go and contemplate this immense aggregate of iniquity—this whirlpool of sin carrying myriads round its sweeping vortex, insensate and reckless, to everlasting ruin; and when considering that it has thus rolled for nearly six thousand years, say, whether, with a nature so perverse and blighted, we are progressing onwards to perfectibility.

Dr. Arnold affirms that unless the effusion of some new race into the elements of our northern civilization to elevate and strengthen its character, be effected, similar to that of the Goths and Huns into Roman society, or the combination of the Norman and Saxon races, we are in the last epoch

of the world's history ; and he despairs of any existing race being capable of such amalgamation.* The accuracy of this opinion, however, we much question. The elements of progress among European nations have not been half developed ; and if, as has been said, the ascendancy of commercial nations be limited to two hundred years, we have at least a century for further progress ; and who can tell what revolutions may occur during that period, to raise and depress nations, and develop the latent elements of a higher civilization among ourselves and other less prosperous races ! "We are young," says Lamartine, "we are hardly arrived at the age of virility. A new creation of ideas, of social forms, and of arts, will probably arise before many ages, out of the grand ruin of the middle age, which we ourselves are in. One feels that the moral world is charged with fruits, which it will produce in convulsions and grief. Ideas multiplied by the press, bring with them discussion, criticism, and examination everywhere ; and by directing the light of intelligence to every point of fact, or speculation in the world, will lead on invincibly to the age of reason."†

It may be admitted that any attempts at metaphysical reasoning from the nature of mind itself, in favour either of or against the doctrine of perfectibility, is, at best, inconclusive. Limitation of the faculties may be considered an imperfection, but it is one of those wholly incurable in this state of

* Introductory Lectures on the Study of Modern History, p. 37.

† Pilgrimage, vol. 2., p. 81.

nature, since, however elevated the Deity had chosen to create us, we must still have been limited, in comparison with his own incommunicable attributes. But mere limitation does not necessarily involve moral imperfection, because it is no contradiction to suppose the existence of beings of a higher nature and endowed with greater faculties than ourselves, and free from the alloy of evil; or to suppose of an era in existence when our original ancestors were exempt from sin, and in a state of moral perfection. Hence, so long as moral imperfection does not spring from the limitation of our faculties, no mere elevation of their nature nor superaddition to their number, could have raised us in the scale of infinite moral perfection, as we would still, however great our powers, have been at an infinite distance from the Creator. It is also certain that the organization of the faculties does not necessarily involve moral imperfection, since the supposition would endow the mere mental form or structure with what alone can belong to its essence or principle, and with motivity, which can alone spring from an intelligent free agent. Nor does man's material frame and contact with a world of matter necessarily involve moral imperfection, since that would also rob him of his free agency by charging all his defects and sins to the malignity of matter. Nor does the mere contact with other intelligent beings necessarily involve moral imperfection, since that would place all our lapses from truth and virtue to the account of others and not to ourselves; and in contradictory terms, charge communities of mankind with vices, not originally inherent in the constitution of each, and, hence, make all non-

responsible. All mankind are, therefore, limited in faculties, and imperfect and tending to evil, and the same arguments which show our natural and inherent imperfections, prove how abortive are all human attempts to arrive at perfectibility.

Where, then, does the chain of our argument lead us? Does it prove that ancient nations and dynasties have been permitted to pass over the stage of being, and blotted from the map; to prepare the seeds and hasten the progress of future perfectibility? Does it prove that modern revolutions, and the emancipation and diffusion of knowledge, have laid the basis of an actual regeneration of society? that the forms and structure of society itself are favourable to the full measure of perfectibility on earth? or that the nature and tendencies of mind support the dream-like theory? Alas! the opposite of all these is the case.

Still, amidst all that seems dark and demoralizing around us, and forbidding us to hope for ultimate perfectibility, we are naturally proud of our position among the nations of the world. But as national advancement as a whole, does not always comprise the equal advancement of individuals in the scale of prosperity and happiness, other causes than equal government—equal laws, and the impartial administration of political justice, as advocated by Godwin, and the universal diffusion of knowledge to enable men beforehand to judge of the consequences of their actions, must practically work out the grand problem of human perfectibility. We do not, like Leibnitz and his disciples in optimism, think this the best world that God could have created to be permissive

of evil, because the very supposition seems to place a curb upon his power; and, like many Sextus's in guilt, he could have created many worlds differing in degrees of delinquency. We do not, like George Combe, attempt to trace the great bulk of our evils to ignorance of the natural laws, and, hence, look to a more thorough knowledge of physical cause and effect, as the prime means for our moral and social elevation. We do not, like Plato in his ideal republic, and Robert Owen in his "Book of the New Moral World," expect to find a regenerating principle in man by extinguishing the natural affections, and substituting promiscuous licentiousness for the private home and the social hearth. We differ as widely from all these as from the French dreamers of the doctrine,—who would free the mind from the trammels of priestcraft and kingcraft by the diffusion of knowledge and philosophy, and yet, in strange contradiction to all, leave the animal instincts uncurbed and free,—who by improvements in medicine would immensely extend human longevity, to be followed by annihilation, instead of that immortality brought to light by the great Redeemer.

"Knowledge is power." The aphorism is true in more points than one. It is the power for evil as well as for good. As the theorists of perfectibility consider it, their views can never be attained. Mere knowledge reflected from all around us, and universally applied, may partially civilize, but can never regenerate the inner man; and all true and lasting civilization must be fixed upon a moral and virtuous basis. Moral means alone can produce lasting moral effects; and moral, in union with physical well-being,

when drawing their strength from a spirit of true religion, can alone have a tendency to produce a true and permanent perfectibility. And when the primary basis of all education is thus impregnable and profound, the mastery of other auxiliary scientific and literary acquisitions will shine with increasing lustre and add ornament and grace to the temple of knowledge, then the temple of truth. Thus did Newton and Grotius, Locke and Boyle, do it homage. Let but such principles actuate and guide mankind, and then shall true knowledge shine triumphant—then shall it tread the track of universal peace, leaving the stamp of the true golden age behind it,—then war, the offspring of ambition and ignorance, like an extinguished volcano, shall cease to shake the world with its sanguinary convulsions—then the sword shall be forged into the reaping hook, and the lion shall lie down with the lamb,—then all passions shall be subdued and hallowed, and a millennium, all but divinely perfect, shall be realized in the changed heart and aspects of the people of the world; and the philosopher's stone being found, and its transmuting qualities realized shall, in the guise of high and sacred knowledge, influence and direct the true moral interests of the world, and create in the now darkened purlicus of the human heart, and the abodes of men, a blooming paradise of intellectual, moral, and religious sweets.

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